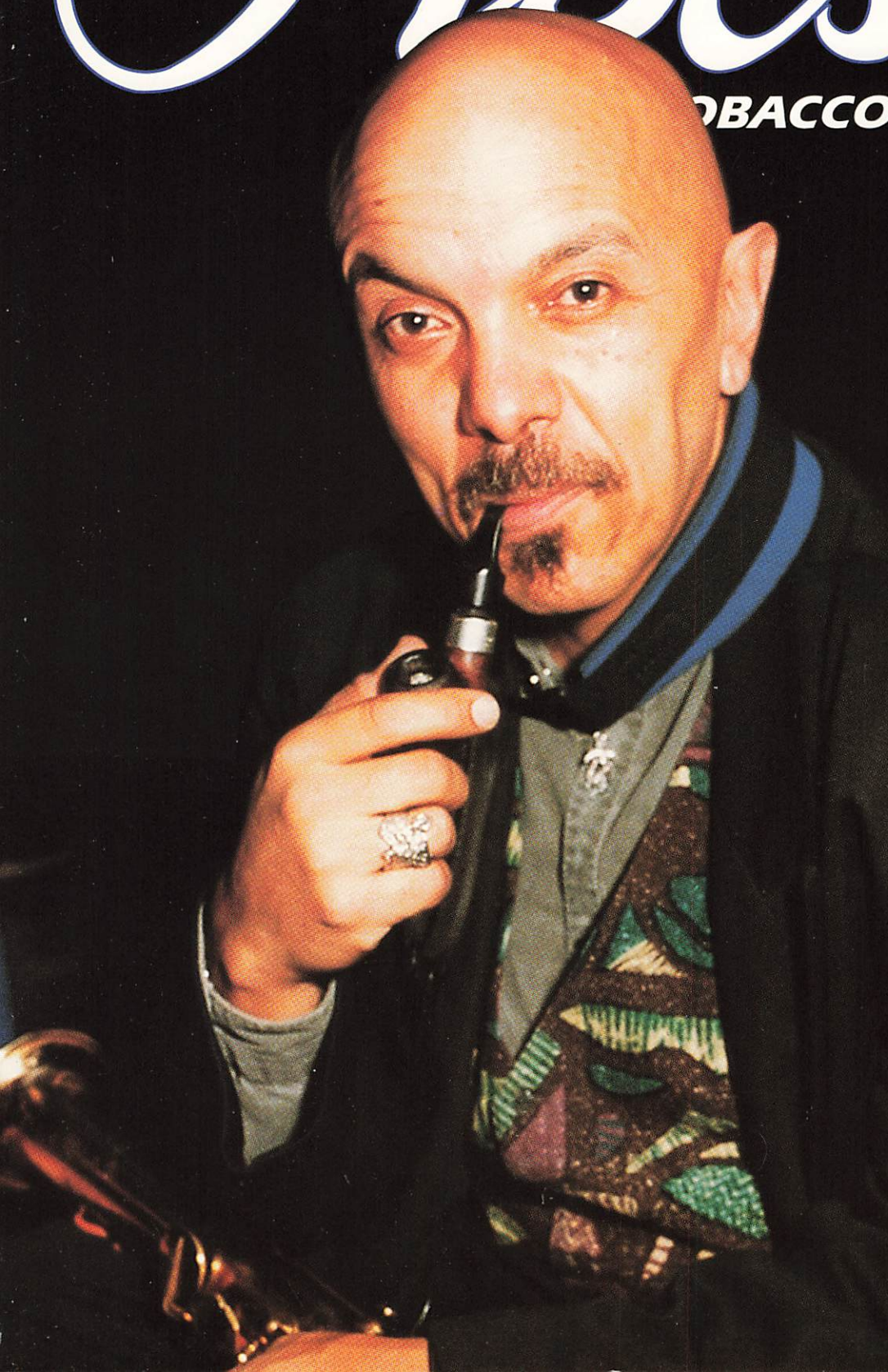
Pipes

OBACCOS



Summer 1997

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Sax Jazzman

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

SER JACOPO

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72

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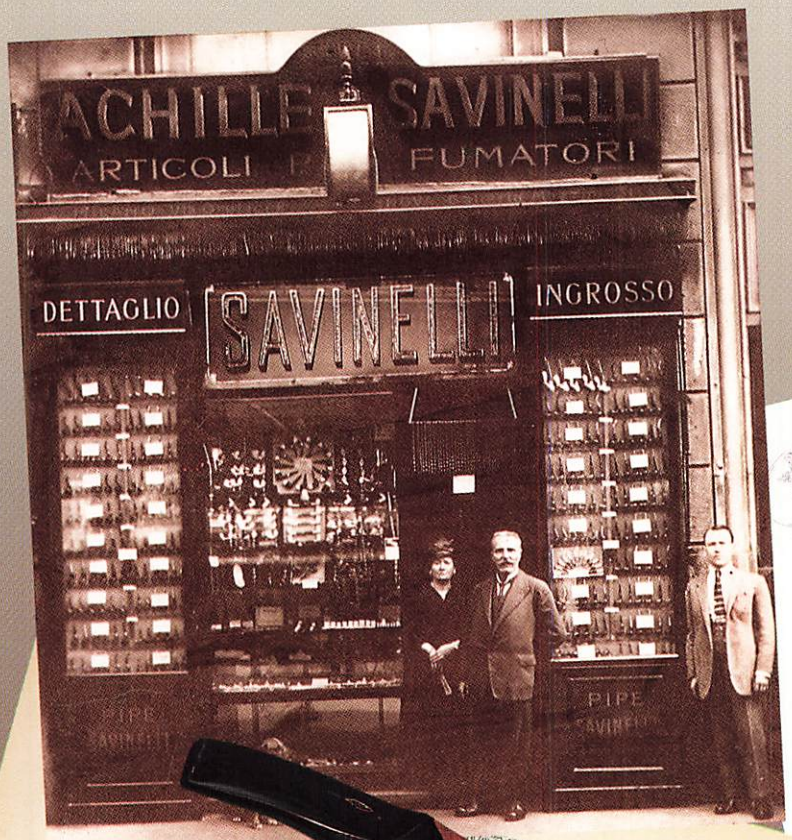
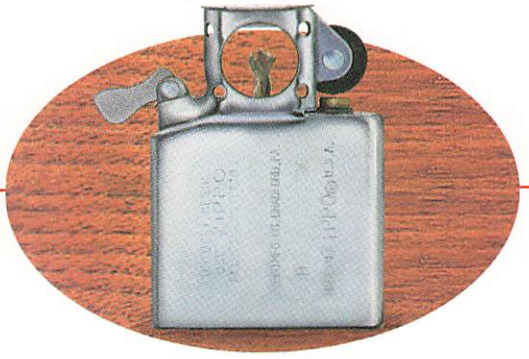
1876

120th Anniversary Limited Edition

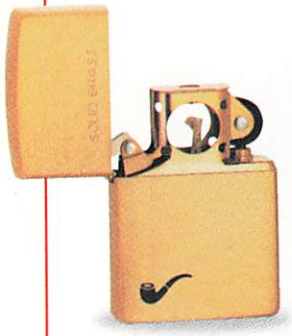


ENTE AVTONOMO DELLA FIERA CAMPIONARIA INTERNAZIONALE
DIPLOMA DI PARTECIPAZIONE ALLA FIERA ESPOSIZIONE 1928
1928
RILASCIATO ALLA DITTA
ESPOSITRICE NEL GRVPPO
IL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSIGLIO GENERALE
IL SEGRETARIO GENERALE
IL PRESIDENTE DELLA GIUNTA ESECVTIVA



The beauty of the Zippo pipe chimney is how well it works, not how good it looks.

That is, until you slip it into one of these.



Brush Brass

Brush Chrome

Black Matte

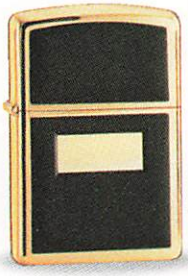
Scrimshaw Ship

Black Matte w/Zippo & Border

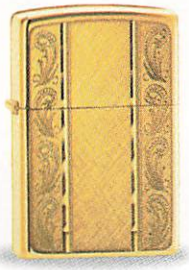
Toledo Majestic Eagle

Gold Plated Floral

Solid Brass Manhattan Nights



Gold Plated Black Elegance



After Five Fifth Avenue

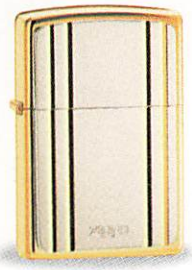
Brass Emblem Eagle Over Mesa

Metallique "Windy"

Sterling Shimmer

High Polish Chrome Zuni

After Five Urban Cowboy



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Pipes AND TOBACCOS

A quarterly magazine celebrating pipes of all kinds and fine tobaccos.

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The cigar presence

Tobacco comes in many forms, each of which is preferred by a given clientele. However, few smokers, other than perhaps cigarette smokers, smoke only one version of tobacco. For example, our research shows that approximately 40 percent of the new, young pipe smokers also enjoy cigars at least occasionally.

A few readers have sent letters objecting to articles in this publication on subjects other than pipes, pipe tobaccos and directly related subjects. We, on the other hand, feel a responsibility to speak more to the whole individual who enjoys pipes. He or she often partakes of other forms of the "golden leaf."

For those who feel we devote too much space to these alternative uses, I would like to outline our current policy: We periodically run an article on these other tobacco forms, but never more than one article in each issue. We also do not cover each type of use more than once during a calendar year. If you check back, you will find we ran one cigar article in 1996 and one in 1997, for example. We have also run an article on kreteks. In the future, we may cover other subjects, such as moist and dry snuff, both of which have intriguing histories. However, we will not run articles on popular, multi-national cigarettes.

A second criticism we hear concerns the cigar ads in the magazine. Rather than objecting, we should all congratulate those companies for their support.

The resurgence of pipes is still in its infancy. It is coming, but slowly, which is arguably the best way. In the meantime, the amount of advertising revenue from pipe manufacturers and pipe tobacco companies, plus circulation revenue, falls far short of our expenses. Part, but not all, of those shortfalls are made up by other companies, primarily at this time by the manufacturers of premium cigars.

We welcome their presence and hope it will continue.

'Tis the season...

Travel plans call for visiting northwest Italy in May. The quality of pipes produced there is sufficient reason in and of itself. This travel is timely because of some anniversaries being celebrated there this year.

The grandfather of the region is Savinelli, which has been in business 120 years. Castello and Brebbia have both been in business 50 years. All three companies produce pipes that delight North American pipe smokers.

We plan to cover these and other pipemakers from this area in future issues. In addition, on June 28-29 Brebbia is sponsoring a Jubilee Celebration, which we hope to cover in the Fall issue, if time permits.

The program begins with dinner and entertainment on Saturday evening, followed by a full day of events on Sunday. These include an antique show and a pipe show, with prizes for the best exhibits, followed by lunch with Lombard Specialities. Afternoon smoking contests will be followed by awarding of prizes. Throughout the day guests will be able to fly in Captain Fiorenzo Marmentini's hot air balloon. And all of this will be held near Lake Maggiore at the foot of the Alps. Envy is allowed.

Dayton H. Matlick

RADICE

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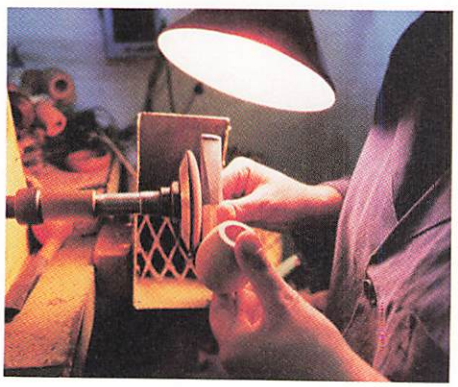

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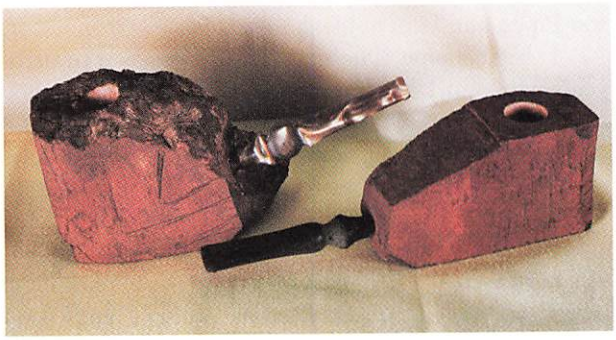

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Cover

Kenny Blake has his pipes with him at all times, even taking a puff or two when someone else is in the spotlight. Photo by Mark Stein.

P&T Readers Respond

"Peterson of Dublin" a pip

I am just writing to say thank you, thank you, thank you! Thank you for a serious, informative magazine for pipe smokers. I loved your article on Kapp and Peterson ("Peterson of Dublin"). Being of Irish descent, I have taken up collecting Peterson Pipes, and I am hooked.

I began pipe smoking about four years ago, and I have never looked back. My first pipe was a Dr. Grabow that I purchased at a local drugstore. Soon after, I visited a local tobacconist and bought a "barrel" pipe. I was amazed at the difference. I then got my first Peterson, and I was in heaven.

Stephen M. Klima
Playa del Rey, California

May the Irish saints be praised! Thank you for the wonderful article on Peterson pipes. In July 1990 my wife, my sister-in-law and I had the wonderful experience of visiting Ireland. While there, I had the smoker's dream of visiting the Kapp and Peterson factory. Paddy Larrigan conducted the tour. Paddy took an ebauchon and fashioned the bowl with a fraising machine. He then finished shaping it on a sanding wheel. I was then shown the department where the pipe bowls are judged for quality....What a tour! Anyone who enjoys pipes needs to visit a factory somewhere. Seeing how they are made will really enhance one's appreciation of our hobby.

Charles W. Anderson
St. Louis, Missouri

I have just read with great interest the Spring edition of *P&T* and in particular your feature on Peterson. On behalf of everyone here, please accept our congratulations not only for the Peterson story but indeed for the quality and content of the entire magazine which grows from strength to strength.

Tom Palmer
President
Peterson of Dublin
Dublin, Ireland

Toronto bound

I greatly enjoyed the Salvador Dali article ("Driven artist soars to new heights") and its beautiful illustrations. May I also congratulate Mr. Matlick and Mr. Stanion on the Julius Vesz article ("Toronto Pipesmith")—and the absolutely delicious photography of the Vesz shop which I know I must make plans to visit someday.

James Koch
Pittsboro, North Carolina

Memory lane

I recently came across a copy of your magazine. Congratulations from a longtime pipe smoker! The articles, as well as the lovely color photographs, recalled memories of my introduction to the satisfying and personal pastime of pipe smoking.

A friend had brought me to a small, cluttered workshop/showroom in Brooklyn owned by one Dominick Cazzetta, who handmade pipes under the name Don-Lou. Don, as everyone called him, had apprenticed under Ulysses Jobey, had worked at virtually every major pipe company in the country, and had even owned his own factory.

Spending time with Don was an education, as I watched him fashion a piece of 300-year-old plateau briar, step by meticulous step, into a masterpiece that can hold its own next to any Dunhill or Larsen "collectible." Don also worked with so-called exotic woods such as walnut, rosewood, oak, and maple—and may well have been the only pipemaker to do so.

Your magazine also brought to mind a verse by Isaac Hawkins Browne, from "A Pipe of Tobacco":

Little tube of mighty pow'r,
Charmer of an idle hour,
Object of my warm desire.

James W. Bradley
E. Northport, New York

P&T: Thanks for the compliment, as well as for sharing your memories. We would point out, however, that other pipemakers have used and still use a wide variety of wood and other materials. Nowadays briar is the wood of choice, but before its advent in the pipe world, the use of some of the woods you mention and others was commonplace.

Never too late

Enjoyed your Winter issue of *P&T* tremendously, especially the Ivarsson articles ("Nature's Designs" and "Self-taught Grand Master") and Mike Butera's piece on packing your bowl ("How to pack a pipe"). I've been a pipester for nearly 30 years and even we veterans can learn a thing or two.

C.W. Rasey
Angola, Indiana

And-a-one and-a-two

A customer gave these lyrics to me recently and I thought you might want to use them:

"Enlightening Thoughts of a Tobacco Smoker"
Whenever I pick up my tobacco-pipe,
Stuffed with good tobacco
For pleasure and pastime,
It gives me a sad impression—

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And leads to the conclusion
That I resemble it in many ways.

The pipe was made from clay and earth
And so was I.
One day I will be earth again—
It often falls from the hand
And breaks before you know,
My destiny is the same.

The pipe is usually not colored;
It remains white. So therefore,
One day when I am dying
My body will turn pale.
Once buried it becomes black, just like
A pipe that has been used for a long time.

When the pipe is lit,
One sees the smoke disappear instantly
In the free air;
Leaving nothing but ashes behind.
The glory of all mankind is consumed
And the body turns to dust.

So often it happens while smoking,
That the stuffer is not handy,
And instead the finger is used.
Then I wonder when I burn myself,
If the ashes make such pain
How hot will it be in Hades?

Since such is the case,
From my tobacco I can always
Erect enlightening thought.
Therefore, in comfort I smoke
On land, at sea and at home
My little pipe, with devotion.

Johnny Kelly
Kelly's Tuxedos, Tobaccos,
Cigars & Pipes
Tustin, California

Humor no laughing matter

I've recognized a healthy sense of humor in the staff at *P&T*, so how about an article on the pipes of Sherlock Holmes?

As a neophyte, I've only been able to identify a full-bent, meerschaum calabash, and both clay & wooden churchwardens. It would be an entertaining way in which to present the individual histories of some of "his" more unusual pipes, the makers who produced them and the subsequent exploitation of the great fictional character. (I would like to see close-ups of Peterson's 7 day set.)

I would also like to see an article on Brebbia pipemakers. Their older pipes (±10 years) have become my favorite smoking companions.

Your Spring '97 issue was excellent! Only wish I could discipline myself to read each issue more slowly, and thus extend the initial flush of turning each page.

Alan Waring
Fairfield, Connecticut

P&T: Thanks for picking up on our writers' attempts at humor. A joke that goes unnoticed is a little like the sound of a tree falling on a deaf comedian alone in the woods...or something like that.

Since you asked, we have been planning something on Sherlock Holmes for some time. There is actually a Sherlock Holmes house on Baker Street and the owners have agreed to give us a tour. Look for an article on it in a future issue—but not soon.

Regarding Brebbia, Editor-in-Chief Dayton Matlick already has a ticket to Milan for Brebbia's 50th anniversary celebration. Many pipemakers are expected to be in attendance. His story will probably print in the Fall issue.

Photo fan-ish

I would like to congratulate you on the superb quality of photos and articles. I do, however, have one small criticism. In several articles I was disappointed by the absence of photos of pipes. The articles I'm referring to are "Mining for White Gold in Turkey" (No.1), "Tale of a Pipe Love Story" (No.1) and "The Corncob King" (No.2). Even a single photo showing an array of shapes and styles would have greatly enhanced these articles. And let's face it, the bottom line for this whole experience is the pipe.

I would also like to suggest a forum where readers could submit photos and descriptions of favorite pipes in their collections. To get the ball rolling, I am enclosing some pictures of a pipe I acquired at the Tucson Gem & Mineral Show in 1993. This is a "Bajokwe Congo Two Figure Pipe of Ivory and Wood with Copper Stem" from the Luis F. Bacardi collection. The bases and tops of the ivory figures appear to be wrapped cord impregnated with resin or pitch. The white patches on the round base are 1/2-inch clam shells inlaid in this same resin. The ivory figures are 4 1/2 inches and 4 inches, the round base is 4 1/2 inches in diameter, and it is 20 inches from bowl to tip of stem (straight line). All this ornateness for a bowl only 1 1/2 inches deep by 1 1/2 inches wide.

Gary L. Dixon
Tucson, Arizona

P&T: We agree that a photo showing a variety of corncob pipes would have been a good addition to our story on the Missouri Meerschaum Company. On the other hand, the article on mining of meerschaum in Turkey didn't seem to lend itself to photos of finished pipes. Besides, a companion article featured the Large Vienna Meerschaum Pipe of the Austrian Tobacco Museum. Regarding "Tale of a Pipe Love Story," we did in fact have several photos of the pipemaker's finished work.

As to your suggestion for a readers' forum to display their prized pipes, we think it's a great idea and hereby invite our other readers to follow your lead. To be considered for publication, your photos or slides must be good-quality color images that are in focus and accompanied with an accurate description of the pipe. If we have a good response, we will dedicate a special section to readers' pipes each issue.

How to hold a pipe

In response to the point made in the Winter '97 issue on the correct way to hold a pipe, I contend that the way one holds a pipe is as personal to them as the shape of

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pipe they prefer and the tobacco they smoke.

Harold M. Abbott
Tucson, Arizona

Don't chuck Chuck

The Spring 1997 issue of *P&T* is excellent. I read the entire issue, cover to cover, on an airplane from Chicago to Los Angeles. I think you made a good choice in hiring Chuck Stanion. He's terrific.

Richard S. Newcombe
Los Angeles, California

P&T: We agree. But for crying out loud, don't tell him we said so.

First ladies

Regarding the letter from Mrs. Louise Duncan, the lady from Zapata, Texas, who wrote about her love of pipe smoking—Lady pipe smokers unite! I also smoke a pipe and enjoy it very much. My husband turned me on to a pipe, and a love for pipe smoking was born. Women should feel liberated enough to smoke in public and start a new trend. So please let it be known: Mrs. Duncan, you are not alone.

Mrs. Karen Kerne
(A lady also and always)
Pearl River, Louisiana

Back-starting stopped

I enjoyed reading your magazine very much. This is the type of magazine I have been waiting for for some time. Here is my subscription for two years; can you back start my subscription to include the previous three issues?

John C. Haynes, Sr.
Sinking Spring, PA

P&T: Sorry, but the logistics of back-starting subscriptions was overwhelming our circulation department. Back issues can still be purchased separately, however, by contacting our circulation staff at 919.872.5040.

Darwinian development

It has been a pleasure to see *P&T* evolve into a wonderful magazine. The Winter 1997 issue was the absolute best yet. *P&T* has surpassed all predecessors: *Pipe Lovers*, *The Wonderful World of Pipes* and *The Complete Smoker*. Please keep up the good work.

W. Paige Simms
Snow Hill, Maryland

Secondhand smoke

My husband is a pipe and cigar smoker. He reads your magazine and often shares information regarding health of pipe and cigar smokers, such as your article, "Special Report: pipe smoking and health—Fall 1996 issue." I understand the chances of getting lung cancer are lower for pipe or cigar smokers who do not inhale than for cigarette smokers. I am curious if you could do an article comparing the chances of getting lung cancer from secondhand cigarette smoke versus pipe and cigar smoking. I have a feeling that cancer is higher in nonsmokers who inhale secondhand cigarette smoke than in cigar and pipe smokers who don't inhale. What do you think?

Ana Seeley
Lakeside, California

P&T: Interesting idea. Some people believe that a substantial amount of the carcinogens linked to smoking actually comes from the paper used in cigarette making. However, heavy pipe and cigar smokers who inhale have lung cancer rates similar to those of cigarette smokers, which would militate against the proposition. As far as the dangers of secondhand smoke, we think much of the research is suspect. But there is more-or-less reliable evidence of an increased incidence of respiratory problems for the small children (5 and under) in smoking environments, so limiting children's exposure would seem prudent. Research on the topic you suggest is unfortunately nonexistent as far as we know.

On board

I have just recently joined the enjoyable world of pipe smoking. My father, who owns a tobacco store that also sells pipes and accessories, gave me a pipe at Christmas. I must admit that I am completely hooked. I smoke about six or seven times a day. I find myself looking forward to each pipeful.

I spotted a copy of your magazine at the only tobacco shop in our city and I'm glad I did. I read the magazine from cover to cover (the only magazine I have ever done this to), reading each article in its entirety. I since then have purchased my second pipe which I keep in my service van. I can honestly say I will be a pipe smoker for life.

Allan Milton
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

Back on board

You guys got a great magazine. I just found it the other day. I used to smoke pipes but converted to cigars six or seven years ago because of the convenience of cigars—and being too lazy to "work" a pipe. But cigar prices just sent me back to a pipe....Man, I forgot how good a bowl of tobacco is. I bet a lot of guys will be switching back, and I bet your magazine will be a force like *Cigar Aficionado* was with cigar sales. Good Luck.

Kurt Trampel
Hoover, Alabama

Never bored

I have a few friends who enjoy cigar smoking, but as for pipe smoking, I'm the lone wolf in the crowd. I'm sure you can see how pleased I was to find your publication. It is very well received and greatly appreciated! Keep up the good work!

K.A. VanCleave
Dallas, Oregon

I have been a pipe smoker for nearly 40 years. I have about 150 pipes and while writing this I am smoking one of my favorite Blatter Pipes, a Montreal Canada pipemaker. I belong to the "Club Des Fumeurs De Pipes Du Quebec" and it is always a pleasure to meet with other members to talk about our favorite subject and our mistress, the pipe. I came across *P&T* magazine, Winter 1997 issue, last week. It is an attractive magazine, and the articles are varied and interesting. Congratulations for the highly professional job. I hope the magazine will have a long life.

Andre T. Cote
Aylmer, Quebec, Canada

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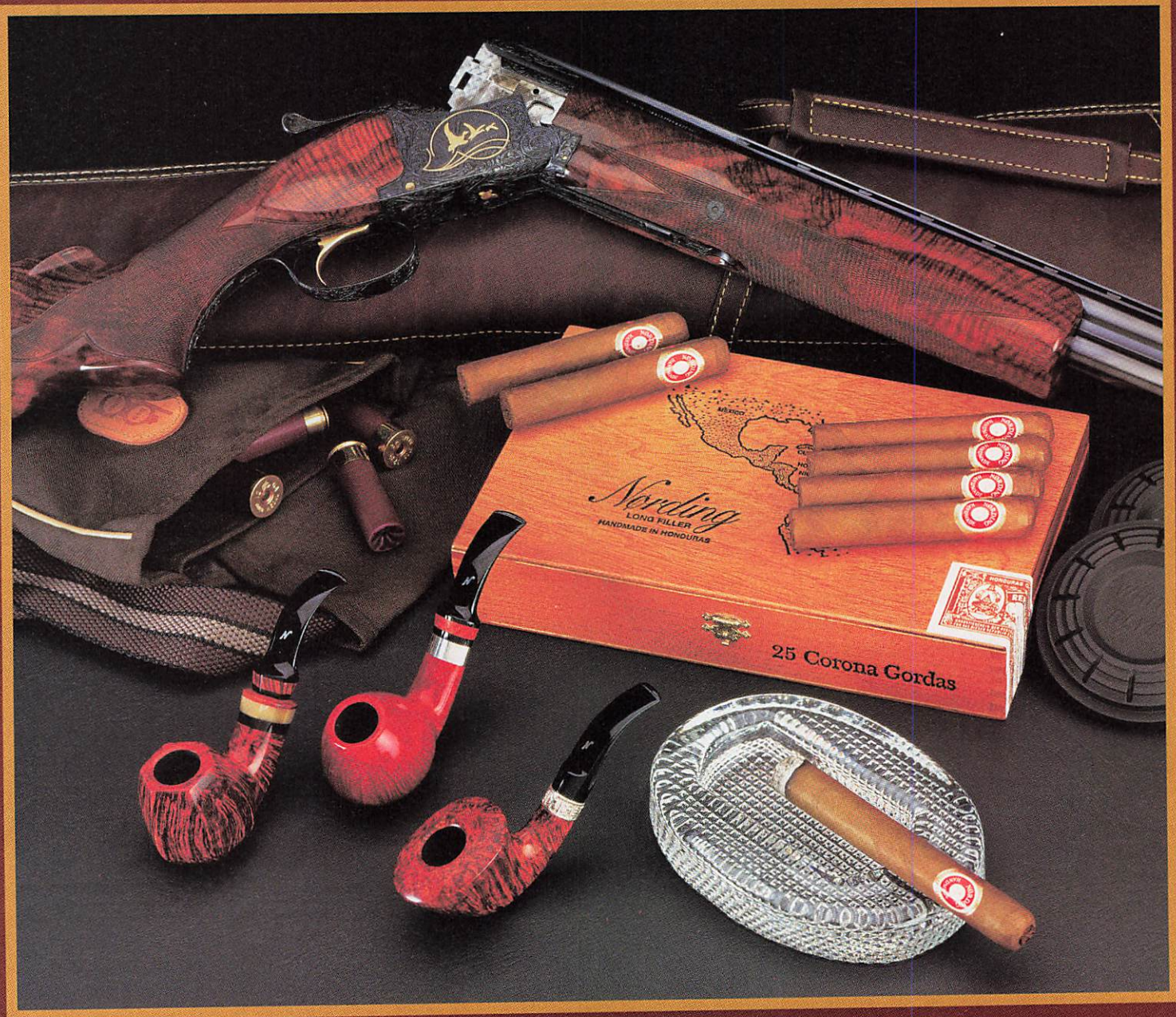

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Same Column, Different Title

What is the optimum humidity for storing pipe tobacco?

Steve Olson
Toronto, Canada

The general rule is the same for pipe tobacco as it is for cigars: 70 percent relative humidity at 70 degrees Fahrenheit, with slightly lower humidity recommended at higher temperatures, and slightly higher humidity recommended at lower temperatures.

Too much divergence may have unpleasant results. If your tobacco gets too humidified, not only will it smoke wet and have a steamy quality, but it also will produce tongue bite. If it's too dry you again risk tongue bite, as well as a hot burn in your pipe's bowl.

But not many of us use digital hygrometers in our pipe tobacco humidors. You can tell if your tobacco is about right by pinching it. If it clumps, it's too wet; if it disintegrates, it's too dry. It's just about right if, when you pinch it and drop it on a piece of paper, it starts slowly unraveling.

But tastes differ. You may like your tobacco a little dry, or a little wet. I like my aromatics a bit on the dry side, so I don't wet the sponge in those humidors as often as in my English blends. Experiment with it. But experiment with a small amount of tobacco. If it gets too humid you may not be able to smoke it for a few days.

My pipes seem to get harsher after I break them in; perhaps I'm doing something wrong. Can you offer any advice or possible reasons for this?

Sean Lane
San Pedro, California

It's hard to judge without seeing your pipes, but perhaps you aren't cleaning them thoroughly enough. Use a pipe cleaner while you smoke to remove any moisture buildup, and afterwards keep using pipe cleaners until they come out clean. Warning: Never remove the stem from a warm pipe—let it cool at least an hour, or you risk cracking the shaft.

Briar pipes need to be refreshed every few months by cleaning them with grain alcohol or one of the available pipe treatments, such as Pipemasters' "Clean & Cure." This is a scented, alcohol-based liquid that you can dip pipe cleaners into and use to clean the interior of the stem and shaft, or in tough cases, pour into the bowl and let evaporate. Wait a couple of days after such a treatment, and your pipe should taste fine, though the first few puffs may have an antiseptic flavor.

Remember, this is for briar, not meerschaum, pipes. Meerschaum will be damaged by alcohol treatment.

I have a few sandblasted pipes and would like to know how I can keep them polished without owning a buffing wheel. Is there any product out on the market which can help me keep my sandblasted pipes just as shiny as my smooth pipes?

Daniel Markowski
Denmark

There is a product called Briar Pipe Wipe that comes in an aerosol can. Here's what it says about itself:

> "A sophisticated blend of waxes and oils which provides a brilliant shine that beautifies and protects fine pipes and mouthpieces without buffing. Briar Pipe Wipe "burns off" while you smoke so there is never a build-up or clogging of the briar's pores. It even helps retard stem oxidation."

I've seen Pipe Wipe used by collectors at pipe shows, but I've also heard some complain that it leaves an oily residue that is distracting on one's hands. You'll have to judge for yourself.

You can also use a soft toothbrush with heated carnauba wax (the wax is too hard to apply without first heating it). This is a better method than using a buffing wheel. Chuck Rio, noted Castello collector, never uses a buffer on pipes with a rough surface. "A buffer," he warns, "will eventually wear the finish of sandblasted and rusticated pipes. A toothbrush and carnauba wax is best." Once waxed, buff by hand with a chamois or soft cloth.

I need to find a source to buy replacement stems for several of my pipes, and since I wish to try my hand at making a pipe, I would like to find a source for pipe supplies.

Jim Hoefelmann
Foristell, Missouri

You sure chose the right time to ask these questions. Check out the article on J.T. & D. Cooke, at the end of which is a list of pipe repair operations. Most of them can easily replace stems for you. Remember, too, that many pipe shops offer pipe repair and stem replacement services through their own providers.

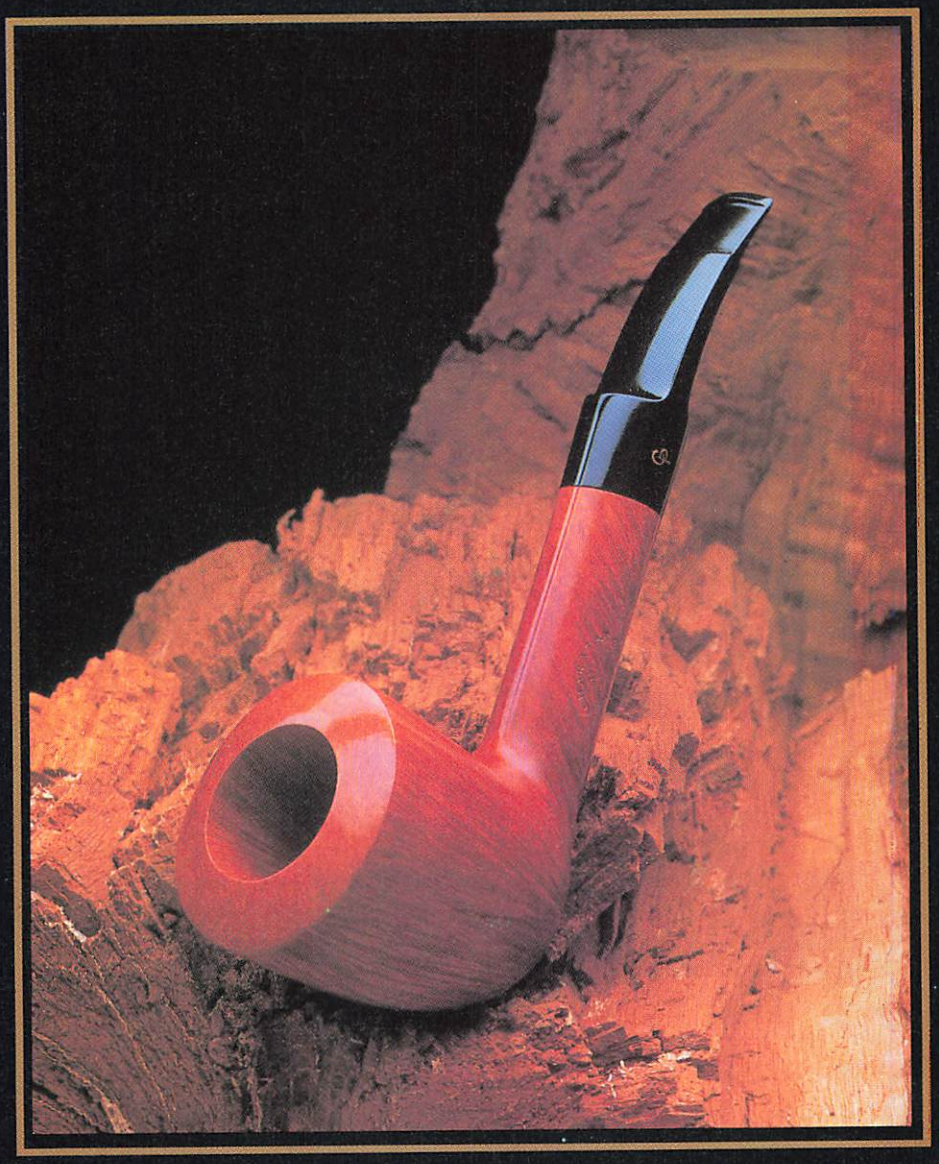
By some happy coincidence, this issue also introduces our pipe carving contest, and provides pipe supply resources. So when you finish that pipe you're thinking about, send a photo.

Chuck, you incompetent bonehead,

That advice you gave last issue on finding pipe racks for oversized pipes was way inadequate. You should also have mentioned Hugo Mesa (802.586.2240), who has been making wonderful custom pipe cabinetry for years. He can make a cabinet to fit any combination of odd-shaped or unusually-sized pipes. You also failed to name Savinelli, Lane Limited, and Comoy's of London, all of whom distribute excellent pipe furniture for any style of pipe.

Better get with it, boy, or you'll end up losing that job just like all the others.

Love, Mom
Tampa, Florida ▶



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Remember that nursing home we were talking about, Mom? The one with the sensory-deprivation tanks? Well, I've got the brochure right here, and I'm picking up the phone...

In the last issue of P&T there was a full page ad of a Peterson of Dublin pipe, labeled Peterson Silver Mounted Briar. Could you inform me where I could purchase this pipe?

D.B. Kirk
Forest Grove, Pennsylvania

Any pipe shop that carries Peterson pipes can special order a silver mounted Peterson for you. If your local tobacconist doesn't carry Peterson pipes, they should, so get in there and start complaining. But if you need the name of the nearest shop that has the Peterson line, try contacting Hollco-Rohr, which distributes Peterson products—they can provide that information. Their address is 20717 Marilla Street, Chatsworth, CA 91311. Telephone: 818.885.0850.

My husband has been acting strangely.

Last year he started collecting pipes. Everything was fine, but gradually he started spending more and more time with his collection. A couple of months ago, he cleaned out our daughter's college fund to buy pipes, and started locking himself in the spare room with his "babies." That's what he calls his pipes, his "little ookie wookie snookums darlings."

Now he has quit his job, and won't come out of that room. He has a buffing wheel in there—which I hear spinning all day and night—and he only opens the door wide enough to let me pass in TV dinners and extra carnauba wax.

Should I be concerned?

Tina Williams
Newfield, New York

No.

In the last issue, Stephen Notte posed the following: "...I always try to smoke all the tobacco in my pipe, but the last one-eighth to one-fourth inch is very hard to keep burning, and does not taste so good. Is it necessary to finish this to have a proper cake in my pipe?"

You gave him some pretty sound advice; however, here are a few pointers that may help him and other readers build a proper cake in their pipes...

First, I find it important to use the three-step gravity feed method to fill your pipe, as well as the first, or "charring" light method.

[These techniques are described in Richard Hacker's "The Ultimate Pipe Book." Basically, you start by trickling loose tobacco into the bowl until it is overflowing, and tamp it until it feels "springy," repeating three times until the bowl is full but not too tightly packed. The tobacco must retain its "springiness." The charring light is the first light, which ignites the top layer of tobacco. You then re-tamp, and light again with a slow steady rhythm to your draws. C.S.]

Second, while I am enjoying a bowl of tobacco, I find that I smoke a little wet. To rectify this, I simply place a pipe cleaner through the stem and shank and as close as possible to the bowl. This will soak up any moisture that may have collected there. I let the pipe cool briefly, remove the soiled pipe cleaner and tamp the ash down.

When I re-light the tobacco, I light it up in a circular manner to ensure that the entire chamber is well lit. These procedures will most likely need to be repeated until the bowl is completely smoked.

Third, as for smoking the entire bowl down to the bottom, that is clearly a choice for each person to make for themselves. A properly built cake acts as a grate in a fireplace, and have you ever tried to burn all the wood in a fireplace without one? Here's a hint that may help you achieve that goal...

You'll reach a stage in the bowl where the ashes you've tamped down may actually begin to snuff out the fire. A good way to remedy this is to empty out "some" of the ash, leaving just enough to cover the top of the remaining tobacco.

Using the above game plan, I have found that I smoke 85 percent of my pipes all the way to the bottom. There are some pipes that take more work in doing so than others, and some that are not very cooperative at all. With a little hard work and determination, you can actually build a proper cake, and smoke it too.

Robert Bartholomew
Portage, Michigan

Thank you, Robert, for the sound advice. If anyone else would care to share their smoking techniques, they would be much appreciated.

Remember, you are welcome to disagree with, expound upon, or offer alternatives to anything in this column; in fact I urge you to do so.

You see, this column is fun to write, but it doesn't use up my available time. There has been talk around the office of sending me to some island off the Java coast to cover a pipe club whose members light their pipes with molten lava from the heart of a live volcano—I think they call themselves The Screaming Face-beaters.

Only if enough letters come in to keep me busy can I avoid this trip. So, please, send more letters, send lots more letters! *P&T*

Ask Chuck is written by Associate Editor Chuck Stanion. The column reflects both research and opinion. We welcome questions, comments and disagreements, all of which may be sent to: Ask Chuck, P&T, 3000 Highwoods Blvd., Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27604-1029. Fax: 919.876.6531. Email: speccomm@interserv.com

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From Algeria to Svendborg

Peterson Mark Twain

How can I tell if a Peterson Mark Twain is one of the original 400 issued in 1981 or part of a later distribution?

Howard Rupert
Tarpon Springs, Florida

All of the original production of "Mark Twain" pipes were numbered with individual numbers, as well as the number 400. Example: 1/400. Silver was used to band these pipes and none of them had fills.

Peterson also produced a gold-banded edition of which only 1,000 pipes were made and they were also numbered accordingly. The standard "Mark Twain" series that was produced later was not numbered and oftentimes did have fills.

Algerian Briar

I heard that Algerian briar has been all but impossible to find over the last couple of decades, but every Edward's pipe I have bought says "Algerian briar." Why is Algerian supposed to be superior wood; why is it in short supply; how does Edward's get theirs; and will more of this briar become available in the future?

Paul Masucci
Augusta, Georgia

Algerian Briar has not been readily available for about 10 years. After the revolution in Algeria, the Algerian government banned the export of all raw materials, including briar. Edward's has an extensive inventory of Algerian ebauchons (blocks) which are used to make their contemporary pipes, as well as all of their pipes dating back to 1958.

In 1914, Algerian briar was first used by Dunhill because of its varied density and spongy characteristics which were ideal for making a deep, craggy sandblast finish. Artisan pipemakers also enjoy the fact that there are usually very few sand spots and flaws in Algerian burls.

Providing that the briar used is top quality, however, how a pipe smokes is going to have more to do with the engineering of the pipe, such as the diameter of the air hole, than from what region of the world the briar comes.

BBB Pipe Marks

Is there a way to date BBB pipes? I have a very old one with three silver hallmarks and "A.F.& Co." on the band. There are no numbers, only the three B's in a diamond on both the shaft (shank) and the stem.

Bill Groton
Binghamton, New York

BBB (Britain's Best Briar) pipes were never marked with any identifying nomenclature for time of production and were produced by more than one manufacturer. As far as your BBB is concerned, with the proper Hallmark guide you should be able to date the silver band which was probably produced around the same time as the pipe.

Considered seconds in England, most of these pipes were exported to other countries. Worldwide distribution was handled by Wally Frank Ltd. and the majority of these pipes were imported in the 1950s and '60s.

The degrees of quality in BBB pipes vary greatly, with some of their pipes being of exceptional quality while others merit the "second" classification.

Dunhill and Svendborg

Well, I am a new customer of P&T and was reading Mr. Adam Cardone about blending. Here's one he can try, it is very tasty.

"English"
400 grams East Carolina Ribbon Cut
400 grams Stoned Virginia
200 grams Latakia
100 grams Perique

Also I have a Dunhill. It is marked as follows: R F/T Dunhill Made in England 13 4 R/B Redbark. Wonder if you could tell me about this pipe?

Also I have a pipe called Svendborg. I'm wondering if the pipe company is still in business?

Don Davis
Long Beach, California

Your Dunhill pipe is a Redbark finish (red-stained "shell" or "sandblast") from 1973. The R would indicate its shape (short straight pot with taper mouthpiece), the F/T stands for "fan tail," the 4 in a circle would indicate its size (medium), and the R/B stands for "Red Bark."

Svendborg was a small pipe factory located on the island of Fyn in the town of Svendborg, Denmark. Pipes are no longer being produced under this name, yet these old-style freehand pipes will surface from time to time. They are a great value for someone who likes the more unusual freehand shapes and enjoys the superb smoking quality of Danish pipes. *P&T*

Pipe Facts is written by Nikos Levin, who lives and works in Florida, where he runs a prominent pipe business. Submit your questions and comments to Pipe Facts, Pipes and tobaccos, *3000 Highwoods Blvd., Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27604-1029. Fax: 919.876.6531. Email: Speccomm@interserv.com*

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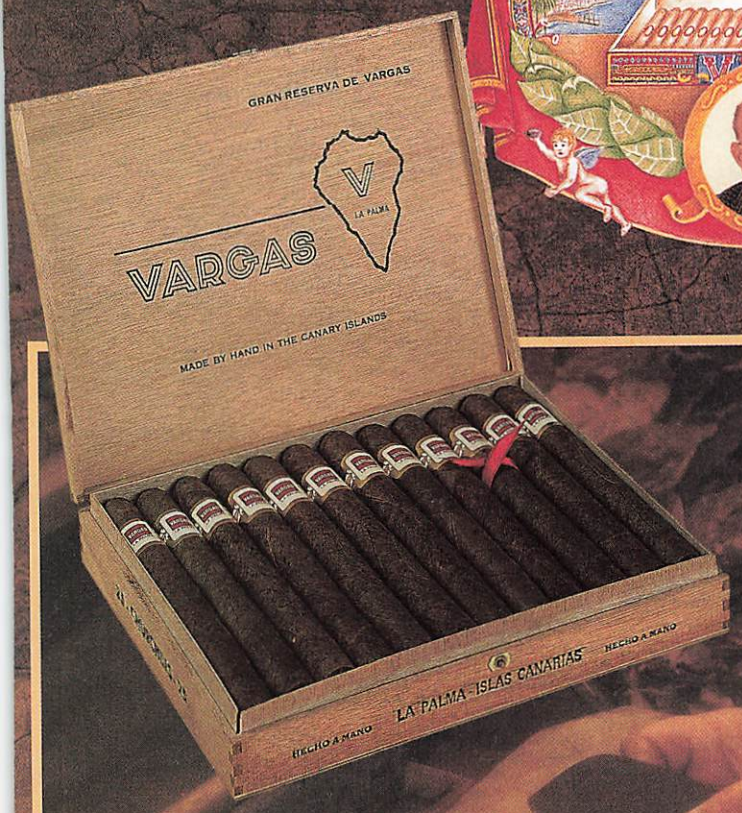

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in search of the genuine article

by Larry O'Connor

His torrid saxophone solo completed, jazzman Kenny Blake drifts toward the back of the stage at The Escape Nightclub in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, and leans against a railing, blending into the clutter of instruments and amplifiers. Applause for the 46-year-old Pittsburgh native dies down, as bassist Gerald Veasley takes over the funky, soulful tune, thumping his way up the neck of the bass higher and higher, laying down some wicked riffs at octaves bass players usually don't reach.

The crowd, about 1,000 strong and already psyched up by Blake, is swaying and hopping, deep into Veasley's groove. Blake takes it all in, outside of it now, just part of the scene. The skin of his shaved head reflects the light from a lamp offstage and Blake flashes a smile. Not some big, toothy, pie-eating grin. Just a little, self-contained smile, one that goes inward and out, and seems to whisper, "Yeah man, this is it. The real deal. The genuine article."

Blake reaches into his pocket, pulls out a small, bent pipe and places the bit between his teeth. He primes the bowl with a few quick puffs, then pulls down a big draft of smoke. He holds it for a moment, and exhales a large blue plume that shoots into the light above the stage and drifts off into the darkness above the dance floor. Blake takes another big pull and blows out again, magnificently alone, grooving to the music, biding his time for his next solo, digging it, on top of it. The man is cool. Way cool.

For a pipe smoker, the music scene, especially the jazz scene, proves to be a pretty laid-back work environment. No smart comments at the water cooler or disapproving looks from the next office cubicle. Most nightclubs and bars are pretty free and easy about smoking, pipes or otherwise, says Blake. And even those that aren't...well, let's face it, if you're the star, the one people come out to see, management has to cut you a little slack. Not always though.

1 p.m. Several hours before the show, in the dining room of a nearby Ramada Inn where Blake is staying, he sits puffing on a Peterson, talking with a new fan about jazz and art and life and pipes and recalling a recent incident where he received what could hardly be characterized as star treatment. "I was playing at a party for a national—or international—company in Pittsburgh and I walked out behind the building in the moonlight by a tree to smoke my pipe and a guard came up to me and said, 'Excuse me, sir. No smoking on the grounds.'"

On the Blake side of the family, there's some Lakota, Sioux and probably Eastern Cherokee Indian blood, so Blake has some proprietary feelings about tobacco, and he let the guard in on it. "I said 'You know, my ancestors discovered this stuff and they smoked it. But you know what? Even if they hadn't, they'd still be dead.'"

He handled the scene with wry humor, and can laugh now. But the absurdity of protecting nonsmokers who weren't even around from the horrible effects of his pipe smoke was aggravating then. "I told him, 'There's a limit to how much you can control. I'm out here with God and my pipe and you tell me it's not allowed.'"

Not that he doesn't understand the health concerns about tobacco. That's one reason he smokes a pipe. On the other hand, he jokes that if

When pipe-loving jazzman Kenny Blake picks up his saxophone, he doesn't just blow smoke

Photos by Mark Stein

On stage, Blake will smoke a few puffs when he isn't playing, and then slip the small-bowled Peterson back into his pocket when it's time to blow the sax.

everybody who smokes now suddenly quit, it might put a crimp in the mortuary business for a while. But he figures business would pick back up again in 20 years or so. "Eventually everything would be back on schedule. Because we're not here forever," he says.

Blake grew up in rustic Murrysville on the outskirts of Pittsburgh with the feeling of being a country boy. Even had horses to ride, which made his father happy, too. The elder Blake, himself a pipe smoker, grew up breaking horses, but worked in the local post office while Kenny was growing up.

Blake's mom stayed at home with the kids. A fine piano player, his mother introduced him to music and was much of his inspiration for picking up the clarinet at age 10. The clarinet was a good starter instrument, but Blake found the shape and the sound of a sax alluring, and by the time he was 12 he had switched.

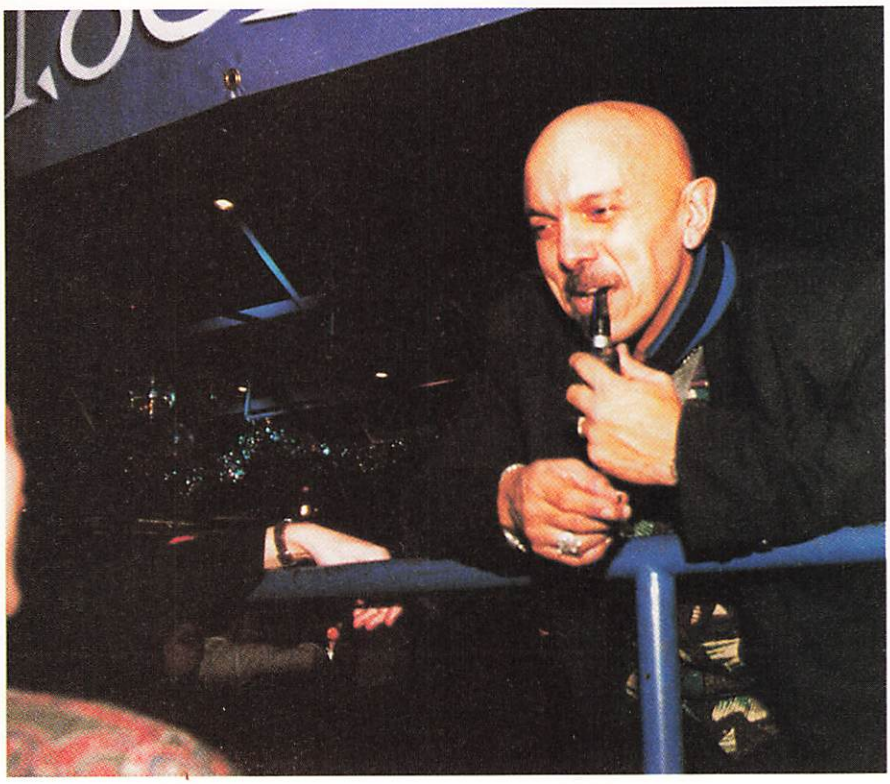
He was a quick learner—if not exactly a child prodigy, the kid who was always first chair in school ensembles. He took some private lessons, but never really studied music formally, something he regrets.

Blake basically learned what he wanted to play. And nobody ever had to remind him to practice. "My sax was always out of the case. My dad says I always played, but I never practiced. I would walk by, pick up the sax and just try to make it do something that I had heard."

For high school, Blake went on to Andover, Massachusetts, the Phillips Academy, the country's oldest private academy, where the scions of many of America's first families have been educated. George Bush went there. So did John Kennedy Jr. But for all that, Blake, a scholarship kid, says it was a culturally diverse, egalitarian environment where discipline, academics, and, above all, integrity were emphasized.

In 1964, the year he started at Phillips, the Surgeon General's office published a report linking smoking to a variety of health problems, and the school banned all smoking. But when visitors from the Mayo Clinic came to discuss smoking, students asked them about pipes and were told there was no established link at that point, says Blake. "It was a combination of that visit and the fact that too many good kids who were allowed to smoke at home were getting in trouble at school. So in my last two years at the academy, seniors were allowed to smoke pipes. That's when I started."

Early on, Blake smoked exotic mixes and even blended his own tobacco for a spell. But he ran out one day and asked his father for a pipeful. "I turned to him and said, 'I'm out of tobacco, let me have some of your Half and Half.' And that was it. I've smoked Half and Half ever since, which means I'm not a connoisseur for sure. But



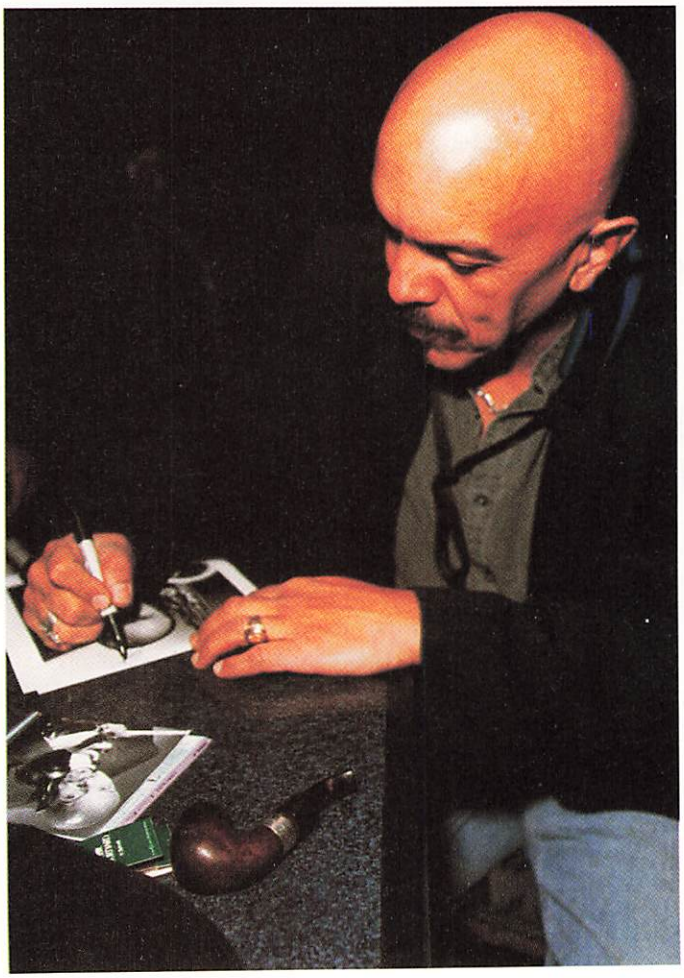
I find that from an everyday smoker's standpoint, it tastes just like tobacco."

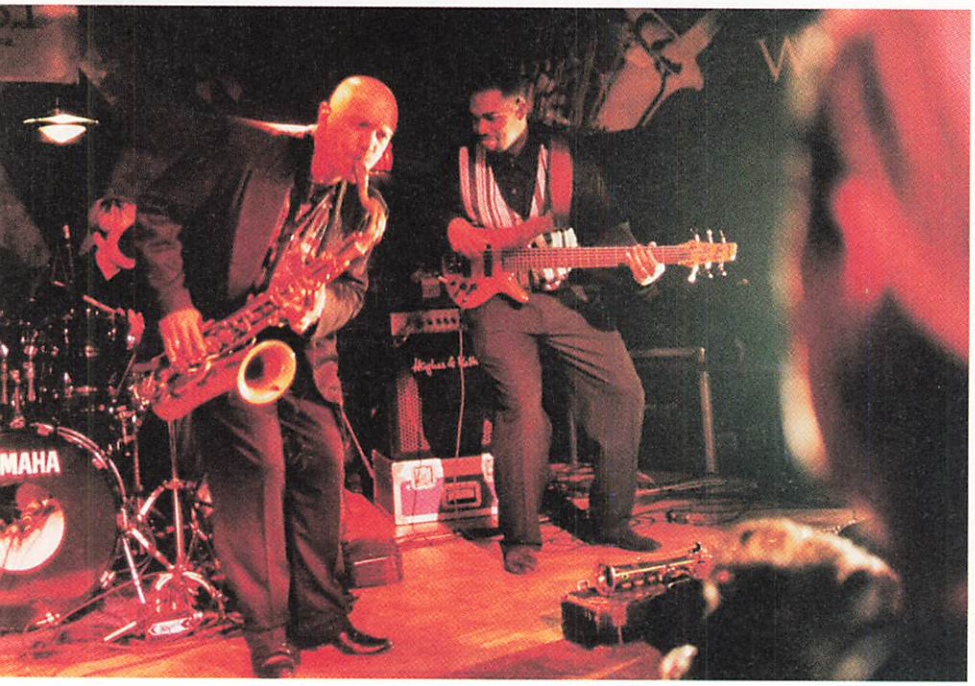
Blake says he isn't as much a "pipe smoker" as "a guy who smokes a pipe." Not the sort to sit down for an hour with his pipe, he's generally doing something else while he smokes. That's part of the reason he likes his Petersons to have a curved stem. "I feel there's a little less stress on your teeth, while you're doing things. And not only that, but (with a curved stem) it's easier for me to handle the moisture that's created," he says.

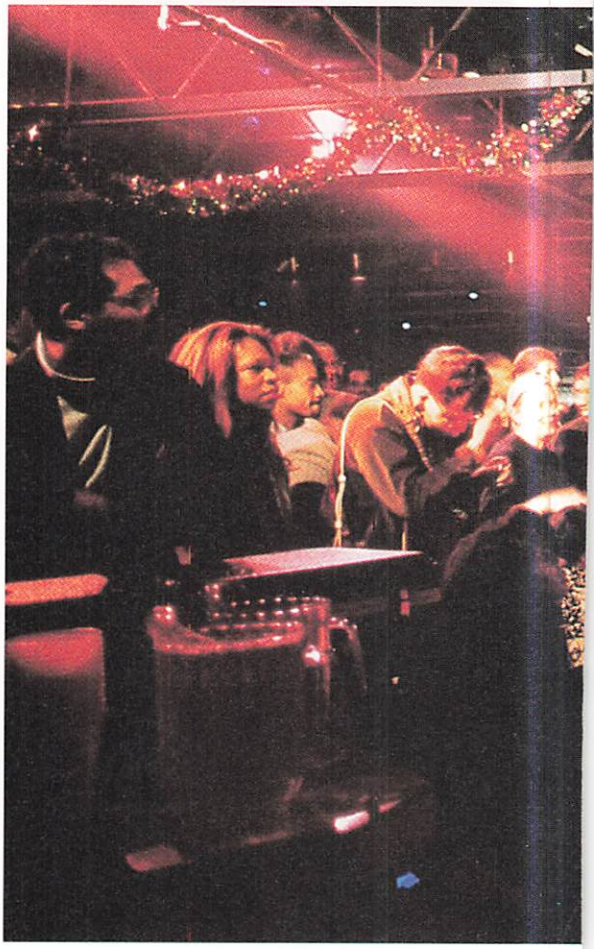
On stage, he'll smoke a few puffs when he isn't playing, and then slip the small-bowled pipe back into his pocket when it's time to blow the sax. "I couldn't smoke cigarettes. What would you do with them? The pipe is such a self-contained thing and that's one of the things I appreciate about the pipe for a person on the go. I can light my pipe, take a couple puffs and then put it back in my pocket. And if I'm not too active, everything's cool."

2:45 p.m. Blake is making his way through a dish of Pad Thai noodles at an oriental restaurant he spotted on his way to the hotel the night before. The saxophonist is talking about life choices and finding your place in the big scheme of things, what for him amounted to a search for something he calls the "genuine article."

The concept is an abstraction, something he started thinking about in his days at Phillips and







"I tend to sacrifice the desire for just being really different for the ability to connect (with people)."

at Columbia University in New York City and even later, while establishing himself as a musician. It has to do with discovering how to make a contribution in life in an uncontrived way, doing something that's real or at least has real meaning for you. It could be something artistic, such as playing a sax or writing literature or sculpting, or a thousand other things that might be viewed as more mundane. "It's finding what your place is in all this, even if you can't articulate what your thing is. And it may not necessarily be on the cutting edge of anything."

Finding his own "genuine article" was a journey that started early on, listening to the likes of John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderly and other innovative musicians as a youngster. "I remember listening to Adderly and thinking, 'Wow, man, this guy is just so articulate it bubbles out. When he starts to play a phrase you know that he knows exactly what the last word is going to be.'"

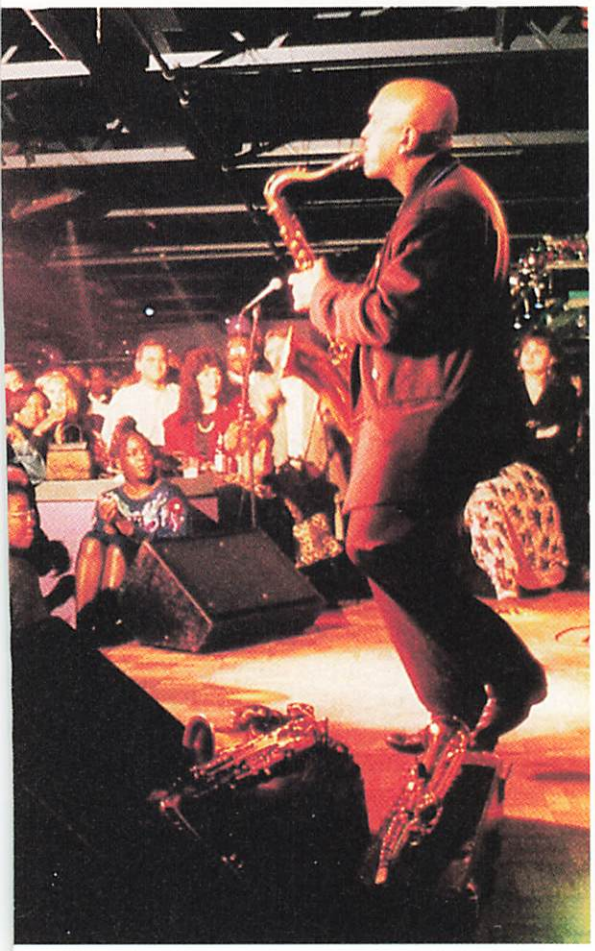
Later at Columbia, Blake pursued a pre-law course of studies, although he continued developing as a sax player and soaking up the environment of the Greenwich Village music scene. He soured on the idea of becoming an attorney and left Columbia just a few credits shy of his degree.

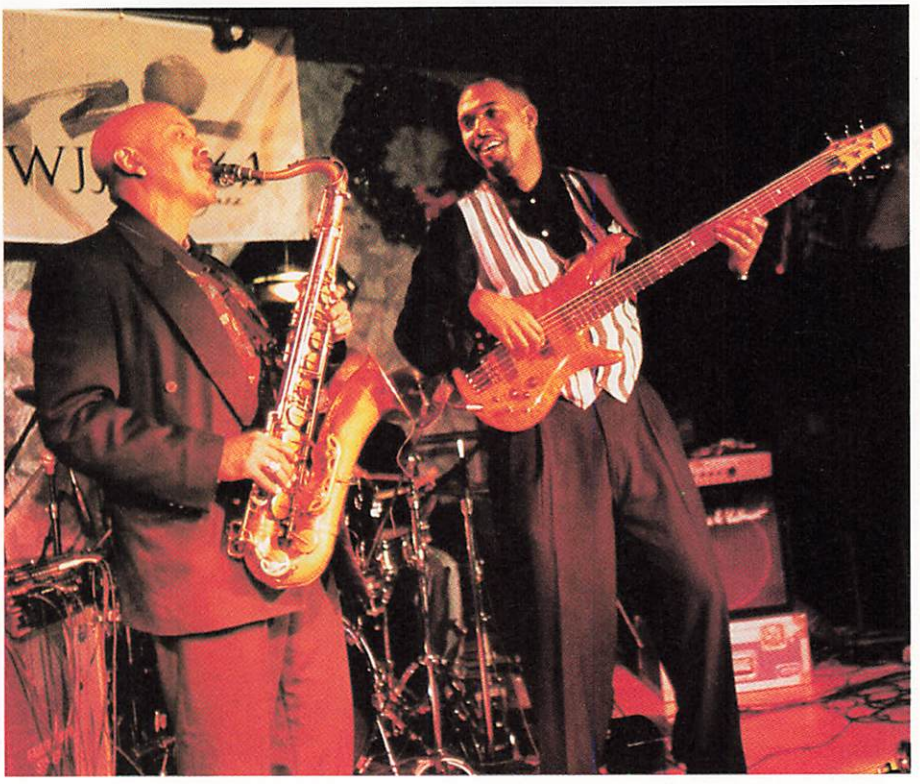
He moved to Oregon for a year after reading Ken Kesey's groundbreaking novel "Sometimes a Great Notion," one of the more influential works of the late '60s, about an Oregon logging family's struggle for survival against the elements, their neighbors, a larger lumber operation and the family's own internecine rivalries. The book struck a deep chord with Blake, in particular its exploration of what Blake sees as the quintessential American concept of individuality. "The idea is fundamentally that the individual approach is entirely valid," says Blake.

Blake never got work as a lumberjack, as he had hoped. And after a one-year-stint driving a truck, he was back in New York City, driving a cab, playing in a variety of soul and jazz bands, and sorting out the metaphysics that would help him chart his own musical direction. What was it that gave all those notes that came from the bell of his saxophone meaning? "I played them and they went up into the air. But they had no substance," he says.

Blake was searching for something, trying to gain some perspective, thinking about John Coltrane and Picasso and Hemingway—men who had made their marks by blazing their own paths—and asking himself where he fit in the creative process and what sort of creative niche he might carve for himself.

In jazz, individuality goes by the name of improvisation. And early on in the tradition, says Blake, the primary goal was to avoid—at all costs—doing the same thing twice. But Blake recalls asking himself, "Do you truly feel the most





compelling thing in the world is to play notes that nobody has ever heard before and convince people that the notes are right? Honestly, I had to answer, 'No.'"

But Blake understood that there was a broad spectrum of approaches and the validity of one does nothing to rule out the validity of others. "We need all those approaches. We need the radicals on both sides. And we need the middle," he says.

And while Blake accepted that there is something to be said for the pure pursuit of one tradition in exclusion of all others, it wasn't an approach that rang true to him. But Blake did believe he had the ability "to interpret some of the things that happen in everybody's life and put them into a musical form in an interesting way." And to do that he felt he would need to draw on a variety of musical genres and styles.

That's what the last 20 years have been about—trying to establish what he calls musical, emotional connections with the audience and, at the same time, a viable career in music.

"I find that for the way I am, the way I conceive of things, making connections with people in the audience is very important, so I tend to sacrifice the desire for just being really different for the ability to connect. And that means that, just like in language, at certain times a musical cliche is the perfect thing to say, because it makes the point fast and it makes the connection. And I don't have a problem with that. In some ways, it just takes the ego out of it. The job of connecting becomes more important than self-glorification," he says.

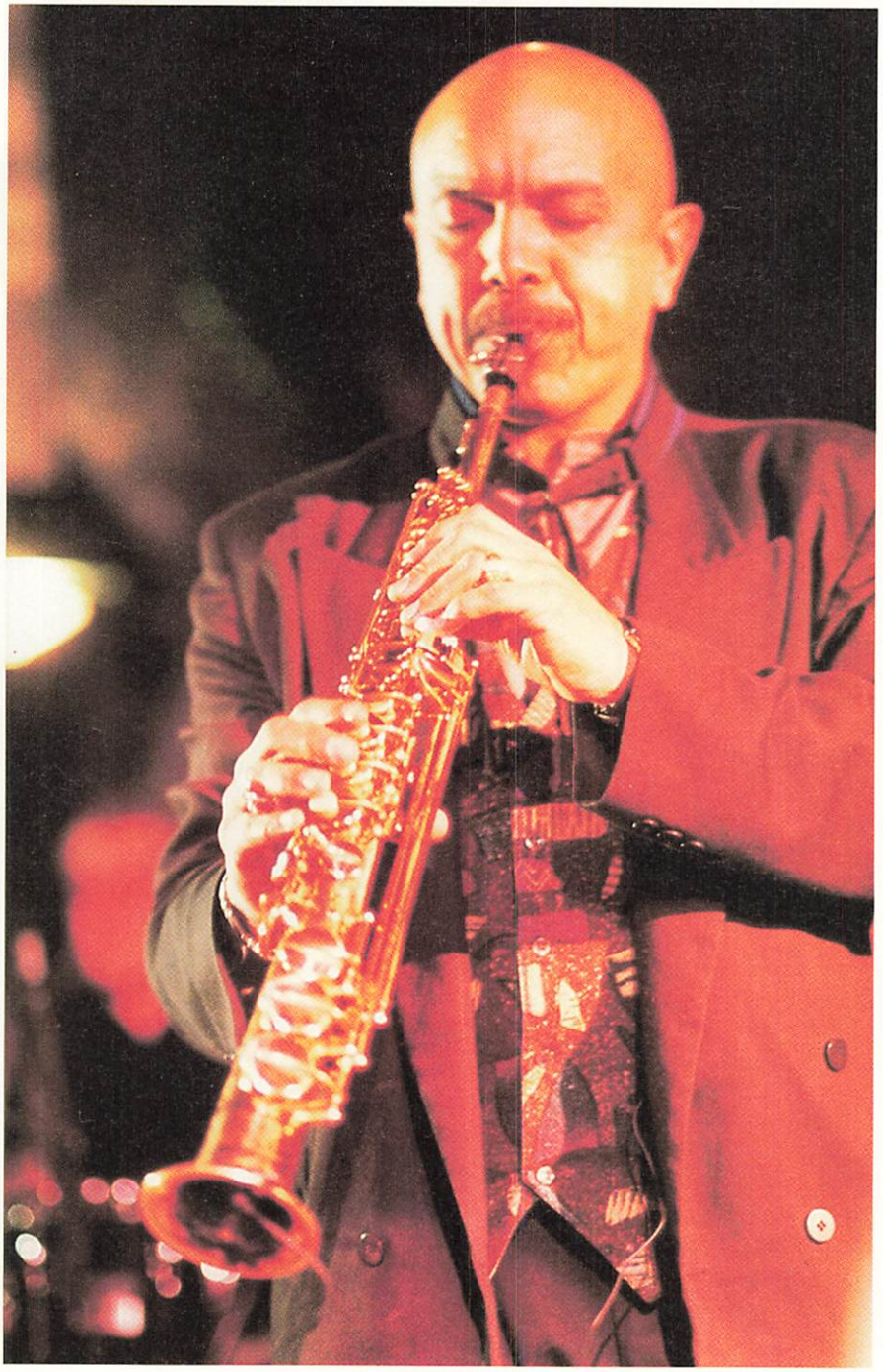
From the soul bands of the early '70s, Blake moved on to a gig with a traveling lounge act. Maybe he wasn't exactly getting his ya-yas, musically speaking, on the Marriott lounge circuit, but he was playing sax as a full-time professional at last.

In the mid-'70s he moved back home to Pittsburgh, where he's been a fixture on the Steeltown R&B and jazz scene. And in the mid-'80s he played and toured for a while with the pop-jazz group Cabo Frio, who recorded for MCA Records.

Along the way, he has developed his own distinctive territory without necessarily breaking new ground. Today's sound in jazz goes by the moniker of "Smooth Jazz"—just words really, a hook to hang the music on. What Blake really plays is a broad mix of music with a variety of R&B, jazz and pop feels to it. At times hypnotic, at times scorching, he has the knack for hopping aboard each phrase and riding it, milking it for all its worth before sliding on to the next.

Blake helped out on other musicians' recordings and made a few of his own on independent labels before signing with Heads Up Records, a

Although it is labeled as "Smooth Jazz," Blake's music is more a combination of R&B, jazz and pop. The key, though, is the connection. When he reaches into individuals–in either the audience or the band, or both–you can feel the tension, the excitement, in the room increase.



When Blake hits a searing high F and holds it...and holds it...you are torn between the physical need for an end, and the desire to live in that tension forever.

Seattle-based label, in the early '90s. His 1991 "Interior Design" soared to No. 15 on Billboard's jazz charts and his next two—"Rumor Has It" and "Since You Asked"—were Top 10 on radio adult alternative charts. Tonight's gig in Cherry Hill is in support of his riveting new CD—"An Intimate Affair."

He also has a following overseas, especially in Japan and Hong Kong. A recent trip to Spain with two label mates—bassist Veasley and keyboardist Joe McBride—came off well, and now there's talk of a trip to Africa. Blake says the trips were fun, but he'd rather be hanging around the house in Pittsburgh with the family. But you've got to keep the record company happy.

3:25 p.m. Faulty assumptions. The jazzman is due at the nightclub for a sound check at 3:30. He figures the journalist is keeping tabs on the time. He's right, sort of. The journalist figures the jazzman has picked a restaurant near the club, where the jazzman's instruments undoubtedly await the jazzman's arrival. He's wrong. What ensues is a mad scramble back to the hotel to pick up said jazzman's blue Dodge van that's loaded with his work tools.

3:50 p.m. Blake emerges from his hotel room and meets the journalist in the parking lot with a still faultier assumption. "So how do we get to the club?" one of them asks.

4:30 p.m. Lost in rush hour in Cherry Hill. A very ugly scene. Blake has just made his third U-turn with his writer friend dutifully U-turning behind him. Neither has been in Cherry Hill before.

The radio in the journalist's rental car is tuned to WJJZ, the Philadelphia jazz station sponsoring tonight's show. "We'd like to invite you all again to come to another WJJZ Smooth Jazz concert," says the deejay in one of those oversized radio voices. "WJJZ welcomes you to another Smooth Jazz Listeners Party with Joe McBride and Kenny Blake tonight at The Escape Nightclub on Highway 70 in Cherry Hill. And if you need directions...

8:00 p.m. Kenny Blake is back on stage with McBride, Veasley and drummer Keith Carlock for a second set. The first was hot, but Blake promised the second would really jump. And he and the others are making good on it. The crowd is stirred up, nodding approvingly to one another and moving to the music. Then the band starts in on a number from Blake's new CD—a revved-up, turbo-charged instrumental cover of "ABC," the Jackson Five's hit pop tune from the early '70s. Or it used to be the Jacksons' tune. It's all Blake's now.

The sax player tosses off the intro to "ABC" and a verse or two, in a jazzed-up, but relatively straightforward way on his alto sax. Then with McBride and Veasley backing him to the hilt, Blake squeezes out a searing high F note and stakes his claim, holding onto the note as if it were gold. Fifteen seconds, 20 seconds, 30 seconds. Blake steps down off the stage, and moves out onto the dance floor. He parts the crowd, like some super-hip Pied Piper, surrounded by a throng of excited dancers. And still no sign of Blake letting go the note. Forty seconds. A minute. The wailing note fills the dance hall with a musical tension that seems almost visceral. And there's no doubt Kenny Blake is making his connection, establishing an almost physical link between himself and the audience. Blake finally releases into a scorching series of riffs and scales, rocking the hall and seeming to say "Come on. Take a listen. This is it. The real deal. The genuine article." *P&T*

It's As Simple As...

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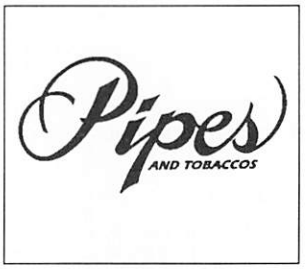
3 

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Sir Walter Ralegh

An Elizabethan version of Ulysses, the English courtier traveled the world, seemingly larger than life

by John J. Brugaletta

Upon return from his travels, Ralegh sparked a smoking craze that swept European society.

Although he was an explorer, poet, knight, navigator, courtier and braggart, the famous—or infamous—Sir Walter Raleigh is most remembered for his relationship with tobacco. And rightfully so, for in his day he led a smoking craze that swept Europe and caused a furor of indignation and resentment between smoking and anti-smoking contingents as polarized then as it is today. Ironically, however, the positions of the two groups were a curious inversion of today's battle. Advocates defended their choice by maintaining that smoking was a healthful cure-all, a panacea for every ache and malady. Anti-smoking objections skirted the health argument, though, and usually revolved around the word "stink."

The book, *Dyets Dry Dinner: The Triall of Tobacco*, by Henry Buttes, defended smoking from such attacks. Tobacco, claimed Buttes, "cureth any griefe, dolour, imposture [adulteration], or obstruction proceeding of colde or winde, especially in the head or breast." He goes on to say the "fume taken in a pipe is good against Rumes [colds], Catarrhs, hoarseness, ache in the head, stomacke, lungs, breast." Smoking (or as the Elizabethans phrased it, "drinking") tobacco was also useful in alleviating discomfort from lack of food, drink, sleep or rest. It was, according to some, well nigh a panacea. And it was, Buttes claimed, all due to one man:

> *Our English Ulisses, renowned Syr Walter Rawleigh, a man admirably excellent in Navigation, of Natures privy counsell, and infinitely read in the wide booke of the worlde, hath bothe farre fecht it, and deare bought it.*

Sir Walter Ralegh (the spelling he used for his own name) was the Renaissance Englishman known in England as the "father of tobacco," the Elizabethan courtier whose face (and pipe) were made popular in America by the illustration on cans of tobacco bearing his name.

Many anecdotes regarding Sir Walter have circulated, but one of the more amusing and revealing of them involves the knight and his son Wat. The two had been invited to a great man's house for dinner. Knowing his son's genius for mischief, Ralegh had demanded the boy's solemn promise that for this one evening he would meekly behave himself. Father and son were seated next to each other at the huge table, with many of England's movers and shakers to their left, to their right, and facing them. As the evening wore on, Wat began to describe his experience with a prostitute earlier in the day. She rejected his designs on her, continued Wat, protesting that she had lain with his father only an hour before.

Sir Walter, understandably irritated at this latest embarrassment from the son of his loins,

This photo of a painting of Sir Walter Ralegh is used with permission of the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library at Chapel Hill.

Ralegh waded through the political sharks of the Elizabethan court confidently —both fearless and impetuous.

This case, bearing his initials and the date 1617, the pipes, and the tamper in the shape of a finger were owned and used by Sir Walter Ralegh. (Reproduced with permission of the Trustees of the Wallace Collection, London, England.)

smacked the boy stoutly across the face. The youth, showing some signs of respect for his father, resisted the impulse to return the blow directly to its source. Instead, he struck the gentleman seated on his other side, saying, "Box about, 'twill come to my father anon."

This anecdote, recorded by John Aubrey about half a century later, illustrates an important part of Ralegh's personality: He moved among the wealthy, the powerful and the dignified, but he was also a rapscallion, with a powerful hunger for pleasure and an enormous ego. Wat was no doubt reporting the truth, even though his motivation was purely mischievous.

The elder Ralegh was the son of a Devonshire squire (a gentleman farmer) who had fallen on hard times. He had been only 14 when he went to war in France, 18 when he went to Oxford (for a short stay), 25 when he first took command of a royal ship, and not quite 30 when he spread his cloak on a "plashy place" for the Queen's dry treading. Not long afterward, he spoke so eloquently in the Privy Council against the way in which Ireland had been ruled that Elizabeth I, who was present, was as impressed with his bearing as the lords of the Council were.

Perhaps more, because it was at this point in Ralegh's life that his fortunes turned sharply for the better, with the Queen's admiration and patronage ensuring his success. And it was by virtue of her patronage that he was able to launch his famous voyages to the New World, found the colony of Virginia (in honor of his virgin patroness), and bring back to England's royal court his taste for the fragrant burning leaf variously known by Native Americans as *kohiba, petun, piecelt* and *yoli.* (Our word, tobacco, is taken from a native word for the hollow, forked stick used by Hispaniolans for snuffing tobacco smoke into their nostrils.)

Ralegh's reputation as a leader of men, as an unshakable opponent, and as an "oracle" on the subject of Ireland began with his arrest of Lord Roche of Bally, a nobleman thought to be assisting the Irish rebels. Faced with an ambush consisting of a thousand of Roche's men, Ralegh took fewer than a hundred of his own men with him, plucked Roche from his castle stronghold, brought him in for questioning and, evidently, lost not one man in the process. All was done with surprise and a boldness that shocked and confused his 1,000 opponents long enough for Ralegh to take what he was after. It was typical of him—he was fearless and impetuous.

But that was not all of Ralegh. He could also be extremely delicate in his approach, as when he took a diamond ring and scratched in a window pane the first line of a couplet for the attractive Queen to finish. He wrote, "Fain would I climb, yet I fear to fall," which she completed, "If thy heart fail thee, climb not at all." His "fear" in this case was no doubt a rhetorical device, though the intimacies that went along with English Renaissance politics had freed more than one handsome head from its shoulders by means of the executioner's axe.

The Elizabethan court, like any center of great power, was swimming with political sharks, but Sir Walter waded through them as confidently as if their mouths had been gummed shut—like the impudent loudmouth he beat in a tavern brawl, whose mouth he closed by gluing the man's moustache and beard together with candle wax.

Yet this farm boy, this captain of men, this brawler, this businessman and adventurer, was also a poet of such skill and genius that his writings are preserved in modern anthologies, taught in universities and admired today. Here is his warning to his wayward son Wat:

Three things there be that prosper up apace
And flourish, whilst they grow asunder far;
But on a day, they meet all in one place,
And when they meet, they one another mar;
And they be these: the wood, the weed, the wag.
The wood is that which makes the gallow tree;
The weed is that which strings the hangman's bag;
The wag, my pretty knave, betokeneth thee.
Mark well, dear boy, whilst these assemble not,
Green springs the tree, hemp grows, the wag is wild,
But when they meet, it makes the timber rot;
It frets the halter, and it chokes the child.
Then bless thee, and beware, and let us pray
We part not with thee at this meeting day.

It seems Wat was as careless about the legality of his actions as his father was of his own. But while his father cared little for his own safety, he was the typical parent in hoping to see his child survive to a ripe and happy old age.

These hopes were to be crushed in December 1617, when in Guiana with a force of men to find a gold mine (it was supposed to provide riches that would set right his damaged relationship with James I), Ralegh sent 400 men up the Orinoco River under the command of an Oxford don. Wat was among the 400 men, all of them under strict orders to avoid the Spanish fort of San Thomé, orders originating with King James himself who was trying to heal relations with Spain. But Wat had too much of his father's impetuosity to obey even his father, let alone a college professor. Wat led the English in an attack on the fort. They penetrated the Spaniards' defenses and occupied the fort, but Wat was killed in the fight. The boy's rash act led to his father's death, for James eventually yielded to Spanish political pressures and had Sir Walter beheaded.

The knight's bad relationship with the new king had begun before James' arrival from his

native Scotland to assume the English throne. At the death of Elizabeth, Ralegh had argued strenuously among his fellow courtiers that there was no need to accept a monarch from this poor country in the north, no need in fact for England to continue as a monarchy at all.

James, of course, was duly informed of Ralegh's part in these debates and, upon first meeting him face-to-face, remarked, "On my soul, man, I have heard rawly of thee." No Jacobean would have failed to notice, or to enjoy, the pun on Ralegh's name as it was then pronounced. And yet none would have felt that the pun made the remark any less barbed. The relationship between king and subject was off to a bad start, and it ended, as we have seen, in Ralegh's commanded death.

Between the two points of their meeting and parting, England's only pamphleteering king attacked Ralegh on yet another issue, that of tobacco. In 1604, James wrote and distributed his *Counterblast Against Tobacco*, an ill-willed tract that railed against smoking as having been "neither brought in by king, great conqueror, nor learned doctor of physic...[but] by a father generally hated." This "hated" father of tobacco of course was Ralegh. Clearly, in the King's mind, Ralegh and the New World herb were inseparable, and the King as much as anyone hated them both.

It was far different living under James' rule than it had been under Elizabeth's, and a great part of the difference for Sir Walter was in their genders. He was past master at the tactful games of courtly flirtation with ladies, but with men he was either a firm taskmaster (to those beneath him) or an outspoken and tactless upstart (to those above him). This made for few friends among his male social superiors, James among them.

But to Elizabeth, he was her "Water," her affectionate nickname which teased his West country accent. She was not much more inclined to appreciate the aroma of burning tobacco than James was to be, but Ralegh dealt with her dislike differently.

On one occasion he boasted to the Queen that he could weigh the smoke rising from his pipe. The monarch, loving bets, took him up on it. Sir Walter called for scales, weighed out a pipeful of tobacco, smoked it, then ordered the ashes weighed. The difference, he proclaimed, was the weight of the smoke. Elizabeth paid up (probably more for the entertainment than for the lesson in physics), saying she knew of men "who turned gold into smoke," but Ralegh was the first who had "turned smoke into gold." This was good-natured banter, something that seems never to have passed between Ralegh and James.

But the joke, at least once, may have been on Ralegh. It is said that a servant one day entered the room in which Ralegh was smoking and, thinking his master was on fire, poured a pitcher of beer over his head. The story, however, was also told of several other people in Ralegh's time, including the notorious comedian Richard Tarleton. Servants of the time lived in their master's home, so it would have been a peculiar servant who was not familiar with his master's beloved habit of smoking, especially when the master was so famous a smoker as Sir Walter. The story may be true, but more likely

One of the most often-told tales about Ralegh deals with a time when a servant entering a room in which Ralegh was smoking reportedly poured a pitcher of beer over his head to put out the fire. (Reproduced with permission of the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library at Chapel Hill.)

Tobacco, along with other herbs and remedies, helped Ralegh build a reputation as an expert in medicine.

it was a joke in which the participants' names could be changed.

Tobacco was for Ralegh more than a prop for parlor tricks or an occasion for jest. It was also an element in his extensive pharmacopeia, for in the latter part of his life he became known as an expert in yet another field, that of medicine. His travels had allowed him access to herbs and remedies that were both exotic and, in some cases, effective. Robert Lacey reports his having brought "a hundred men out of the debilitating humidity of the Orinoco basin with not a life lost from sickness," probably due to Sir Walter's folk remedies.

An incident that demonstrates his reputation for effective cures involves the French Ambassador's wife during Ralegh's imprisonment by James in the Tower of London. The lady passed on her way to see the Tower lions, spied the knight digging in his garden, put in a polite request for his Guiana Balsam, and procured his promise of the potion.

It was not just in England that tobacco was accepted as a cure-all; it was also received in Europe as a remedy for various ailments and sold by apothecaries before it was used for esthetic purposes.

Nevertheless, for Sir Walter it was not entirely, or even primarily, a cure. For on the tranquil morning of his execution, after speaking with the obligatory clergyman, after eating a hearty breakfast, after dressing, he filled the bowl of his silver pipe and smoked it—as he had done everything in his life—thoroughly. There was no question, there was no possibility, of its medicinal value at this juncture. He smoked, as so many in his day smoked, and as so many in our day continue to smoke, for the sheer pleasure of it. Aubrey reports that "some formall persons were scandalized" at Ralegh's smoking at such a consequential moment, but disagrees with them: "I thinke 'twas well and properly donne, to settle his spirits." To which those of us who know the pleasures of the same leaf can only say, "Amen." *P&T*

John Brugaletta is a full Professor of English at the University of California, Fullerton. Founding editor of the South Coast Poetry Journal, *Brugaletta is an experienced pipe smoker. His favorite smoking blend comes from Kelley's Smoke Shop in Tustin, California, and is called, appropriately enough, W.B. Yeats mixture.*

20 ZIGARETTEN
5,– DM
LIGHTS
CALUMÉ
THE PEACEFUL TASTE
DIE EG-GESUNDHEITSMINISTER:
RAUCHEN GEFÄHRDET DIE GESUNDHEIT
CALUMÉ
THE PEACEFUL TASTE
FULL FLAVOUR
DIE EG-GESUNDHEITSMINISTER:
RAUCHEN GEFÄHRDET DIE GESUNDHEIT
Pipe Tobacco
Cigarettes
A Product
See your nearest
Tobacconist
SURGEON GENERALS WARNING: Quitting Smoking
Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to your Health
Imported by: P & K Cigar Co., Inc.

Ser Jacopo

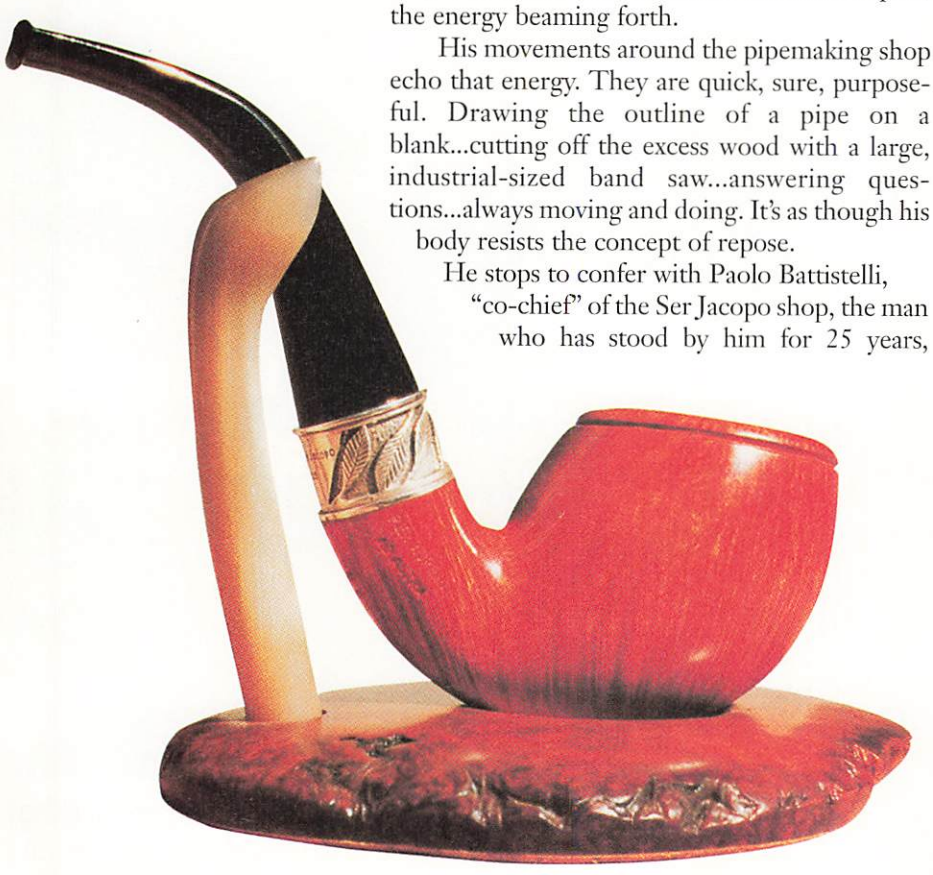
Faced with starting again, Giancarlo Guidi refocuses his designs to build another future

by Dayton H. Matlick

Giancarlo Guidi's smile is as sudden as the light from a lamp turned on in a dark room, and just as bright. It shines with an almost electrical impact, the energy beaming forth.

His movements around the pipemaking shop echo that energy. They are quick, sure, purposeful. Drawing the outline of a pipe on a blank...cutting off the excess wood with a large, industrial-sized band saw...answering questions...always moving and doing. It's as though his body resists the concept of repose.

He stops to confer with Paolo Battistelli, "co-chief" of the Ser Jacopo shop, the man who has stood by him for 25 years, through good times and bad. Battistelli is also the person who supervises all work in the shop when Guidi is absent. Together they decide the priorities of the day, reposition a pipe shape on a piece of plateaux where a flaw in the wood has been uncovered, prepare pipes for display at a Rome tobacconist show.



Guidi traces his love for "the pipe" back to his teenage years when he watched and listened to a friend of his father. "He was always smoking a pipe, loving a pipe. He was cleaning it, caressing it. I remember he told me, 'Don't smoke cigarettes; you *must* smoke a pipe!' That was when my love of the pipe began."

Guidi spent six years in the famous art school, Mengaroni, in his home town of Pesaro, located about half way up the east coast of Italy, on the Adriatic Sea. There he focused on design. The emphasis was on ceramics, for which Pesaro is famous, and metal. By the time he graduated at the age of 20, Guidi understood the feel of something that had good design. He also knew that ceramics weren't for him. The corrosive fumes from ceramics work had already affected his lungs.

Love of pipes stayed with him throughout his teenage years. First, he found a little book in Italian about pipes. Then, there was the trip to a pipe-smoking competition in Varese, in the foothills of the Alps in northwest Italy. It was there he saw an exhibit showing how pipes are

Giancarlo Guidi, right, and Paolo Battistelli, who have worked together through good times and bad for 25 years, are shown outside their workshop in Pesaro. One of their products is the straight-grained, Gem Series pipe shown at the lower left. It is a Domina 1996, their first Pipe of the Year model. This line comes in a wide variety of mounts and finishes, but this particular pipe has a beautiful silver micro-fusion mount with a leaf motif.

made. Around him were hundreds of pipes on display, but they seemed so limited, all looking somewhat the same. Where was the design?

Guidi still has his first effort at pipemaking, done on a lark during those developmental years. It turned out more sculpture than pipe. Other pipes followed as he explored the process of finding pipes in wood. In the process, his love of pipes and smoking also grew.

Then, suddenly, he found he was 20 years old, finished with art school, no job and wondering what to do with his life....

With encouragement from friends and a belief in his own abilities, Guidi transformed the pipemaking hobby into a business in 1970. Most of his early pipes were sold to a big distributor in Fermo named Lubinski. Two years later he had a government license for his fledgling company under the name Mastro de Paja.

Many of Guidi's early pipes were in shapes both new and strange to Italian pipe buyers. Later he came to a philosophical understanding that "pipes must be functional in both the hand and the mouth." So he moved back in the direction of the classical shapes, but not all the way. Each pipe had to carry his personal stamp, to be subtly different.

The life's work started in a small building, located behind the home of his parents, west of downtown Pesaro. The building measured about 28 feet by 60 feet.

With time, pipes by Mastro de Paja became more and more popular. A pipe boom began in Italy and the company prospered. Did the new shapes by Mastro de Paja cause the boom, or did the company benefit from being in the right place at the right time? Opinions vary, depending on the person addressed. But there is no question that an excitement about pipes was present throughout the nation in the '70s.

The Shah of Iran bought a pipe from Guidi's new company. Sandro Pertini, the president of Italy, visited the workshop. Within one hour Guidi had made a special signature pipe for him. A buying fever spread through Italian pipe smokers.

With the beginnings of commercial success came the need for more capital to buy necessary supplies. A financial backer was found, impressed by the young company's growing reputation. The potential for greater successes, plus the demands of the new financial partner, created pressures within the company to produce more and more pipes and other articles. The growing company moved to larger quarters, increasing overhead expenses. Bottom line profits became the focus to the detriment of quality.

As the company moved into a variety of additional product lines completely unrelated to pipemaking, more and more conflict surfaced between the owners of the company.

Ultimately, Guidi—followed later by Battis-

Whether working on classical or freehand shapes, each pipe Guidi creates must carry his personal stamp.

telli—left the company in 1982 under the restriction that the name Mastro de Paja must remain behind.

"To start again was very difficult," says Guidi, "but I had to start again because I believe in what I do. It was terribly hard to grow up a company the second time."

This sentiment is echoed by Battistelli. "When the change (to starting over again) took place, the feeling was not good. There was much tension. But at Mastro de Paja, we had gone from producing 600 pieces a month to 1,200 pieces too quickly. When we grow again, we must add people and machinery as necessary to maintain quality.

"I love this business, a job with passion," says Battistelli. "Our work is never the same. There are always new challenges. I can see the potential in a block of briar, but I never know what I will run into and how well the pipe will turn out until the final sandpapering is completed."

The new company, once again housed in the same building in which Guidi originally started, was named Ser Jacopo. "The word 'ser' comes from Toscana and is a very old form of the honorific 'sir.' It is similar in meaning to the word 'mastro.' 'Jacopo' was the name of a famous Italian family of artists. The graphic was a picture of me, not because I wanted a picture of myself, but because many people knew me from my work during the previous 10 years. To typify the company, I chose the phrase *Per Aspera Ad Astra*, 'through a difficult way until the stars are reached.' The Latin has been continued so that all of my pipe lines have their own Latin names," says Guidi.

"After 10 years of work, I was at a loss of how to begin again. I thought about the structure of pipes. Each pipe has a bowl, a shank and a mouthpiece. There was a limit to what I could do with these three elements. I decided the place where I could do the most to express myself is the area where the shank and the mouthpiece come together. I started to work to solve the opportunity of that junction."

Delecta was the name given in 1983 to the original design of silver, gold, wood or amber bands at that point of union. The goal was to make the pipe "richer" in appearance and feel.

Over the years, he added pipes tied to themes, like the Picta collection. The pipes in this collection are based on pipes appearing in paintings and drawings by famous artist Vincent Van Gogh. The first group of three pipes in the collection appeared in the early '90s. The rest of the 14-pipe collection were introduced in 1996. They are available in five finishes: rustic, sandblast, walnut smooth, natural smooth and a red smooth. Suggested retail prices vary from $290 for rustic to $495 for a natural smooth finish.

"I had learned from my first experiences in pipemaking that anyone can make something strange. Anyone can make something that just sits on the table. I knew my pipes had to stay in the hand, not on the table. They must be practical. To do something classic and still add the things I have in my head, that is difficult," says Guidi.

"And it's not just difficult for me, but for all of the people in the shop. I am a little thing. I must have the people working with me to make all of this possible. I design, but I must have a staff to make the finished products."

Today, Ser Jacopo produces about 5,000 pipes a year. Of these, about 200 are good enough to be part of the Gem Series of the dalla Gemma line. Starting at the lowest level and moving toward the most rare, the various levels of these straight-grained, top-of-the-line pipes are: emerald, garnet, sapphire, ruby and diamond. Each has a real gemstone to match its grade mounted on the stem.

In some years, there are one or two pipes that qualify for a diamond; in other years, none. Each diamond pipe is dated. It also carries the number of diamond pipes produced that year, either a 1 or a 2. Gem Series pipes come in a variety of bands, including gold, silver, briar and horn. However, the gemstones are always set in 18 karat gold.

The shop also produces 2,000 pipes under the La Fuma name. La Fuma pipes have fill spots and are not imported into the U.S.

"The place where I could do the most to express myself is the area where the shank and the mouthpiece come together."
—*Guidi*

Guidi and Battistelli travel to briar sources to personally select their briar. Their principal sources are in Corsica, the French island off Italy's west coast; Liguria, on the top of the curve of the west coast, just north of Corsica across the Ligurian Sea; Toscana, around the coast and to the south and east of Liguria; and Calabria in the south, on the toe of the Italian "boot."

After the root is harvested, the briar companies boil it to remove impurities. The resulting blocks are dark brown in color. When selecting briar, Guidi removes as much of the brown as possible in order to see the grain before making a decision, which is entirely subjective. He tries to "feel" the potential for good grain and the ability of each block to produce a usable pipe.

How long the briar has to dry before use depends to a certain extent on how long it has been held by the source. Usually it has been out of the ground for seven months to a year by the time it is purchased. It needs to be stabilized at about 15 percent humidity to work well, which can take up to another year, according to Guidi. Blocks that are either too wet or too dry can result in manufacturing problems.

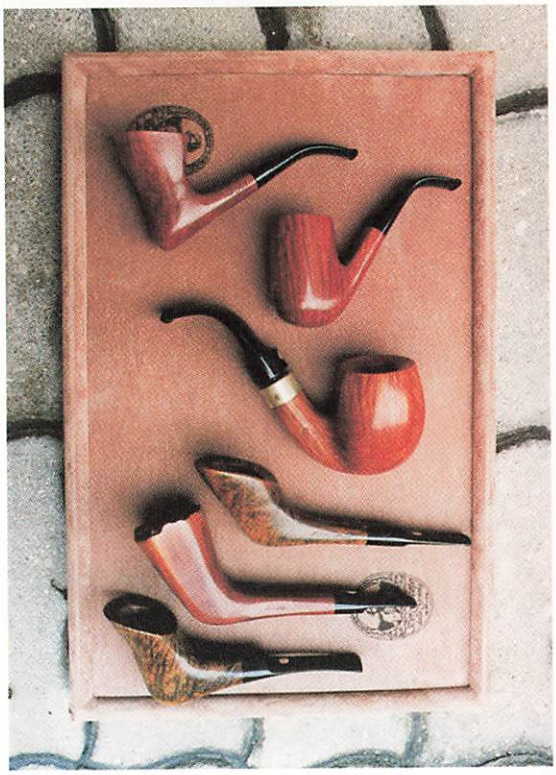
When the briar is "right," Guidi draws the shapes of the pipes on the blocks of briar, either ebauchon or plateaux. "When you pick up a block of briar, the form of the pipe is determined by the grain—the form is in the block. I know what is coming from that piece of briar."

To Paolo Battistelli goes the very important task of boring the tobacco and draft holes. He makes the decision at that time whether the block of briar is ready to go through the rest of the pipemaking process or whether it should dry further before any work is done. Boring the holes greatly speeds the drying process, which sometimes takes up to another year.

Once the block is ready, either Guidi or Battistelli make the initial cuts on the band saw.

In addition to Guidi and Battistelli, there are four others working full-time in the shop, plus two others who work in their homes. Of this group of eight, five have been working together for at least seven years.

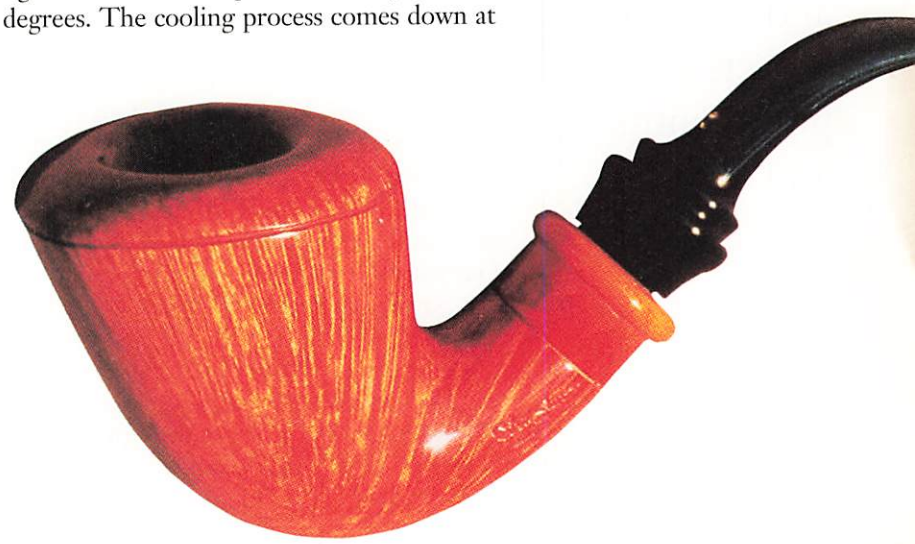
Although all members of the staff can do most of the pipemaking steps, they tend to specialize in certain activities. For example, Michele Bertozzi does most of the work with silver and other materials used for the rings where the stem and mouthpiece come together. Rodolfo Sanchini does most of the rustication. Massimo Palazzi makes the first shaping cuts with the coarsest sandpaper, as does Corrado Boni. Fiorella Battistoni does the final finishing touches with the finest sandpapers. Simone Sanchini both starts the bowls and moves to any activity that needs attention. Palazzi and Boni do their work at home.

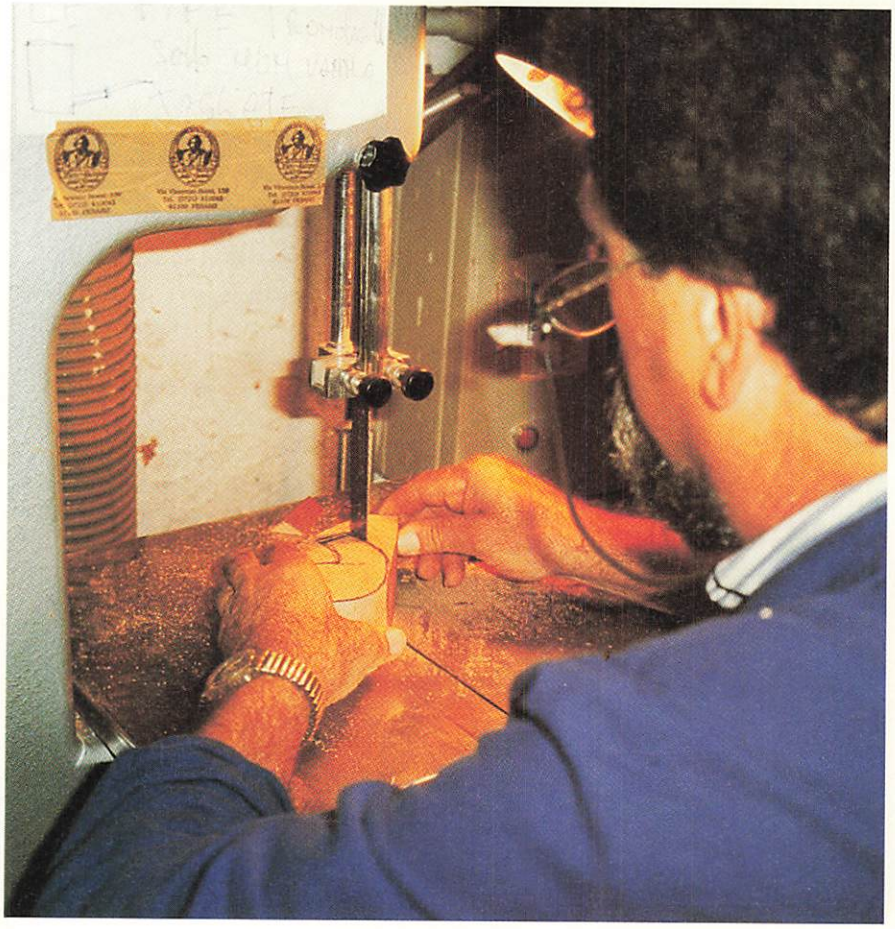


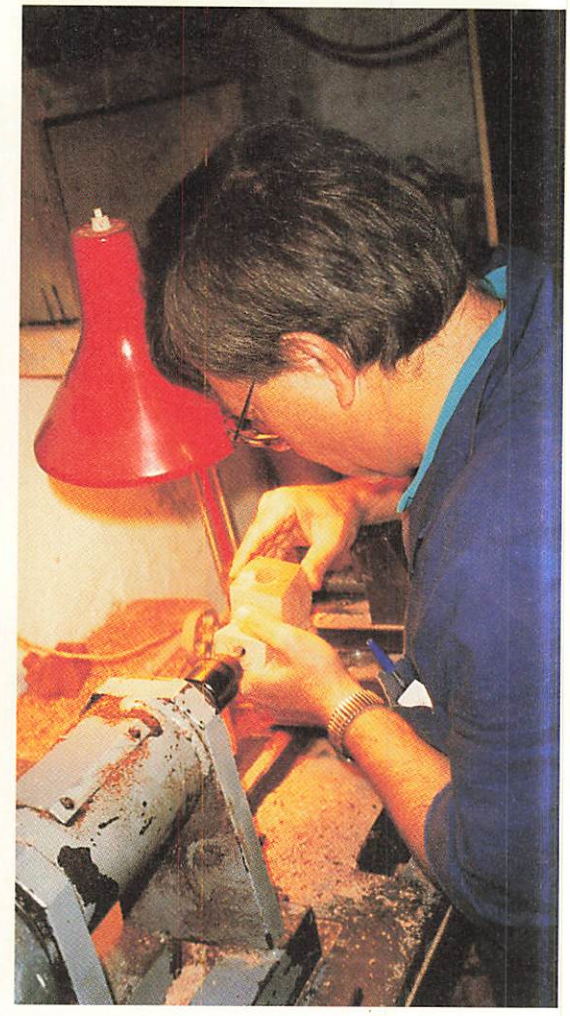
From the beginning of his career, Guidi's design abilities were evident, as was the beginning of the beard which became a trademark. The pipes shown on left represent some of Guidi's early efforts. The three at the bottom of the picture are some of his earliest pipes. Those at the top reflect some of the directions to come, while the pipe in the middle reflects a more modern approach. Below is another straight-grained Gem Series pipe, this one with a cultured amber mount.

The challenge of developing new and different aspects for his pipes continues for Guidi. A new line is called Melolontha, after the ladybug that brings luck. In it, a ring on the shank is opposite a ring on the mouthpiece, rather than having the major ring only on the shank. This new line should be available in the U.S. this year in limited quantities.

A special line called Jucunda, "the taste," went on sale in the U.S. in 1993. The briar is soaked in a special oil for one day. Then the briar is slowly heated. A batch of briar starts at 178 degrees Fahrenheit. Each day the temperature is increased 16 degrees until the temperature finally reaches 320 degrees. The cooling process comes down at







The challenge of creating new and different aspects for his pipes continues for Guidi.

the same speed it went up—16 degrees a day. When cooled, the pipes are sandblasted.

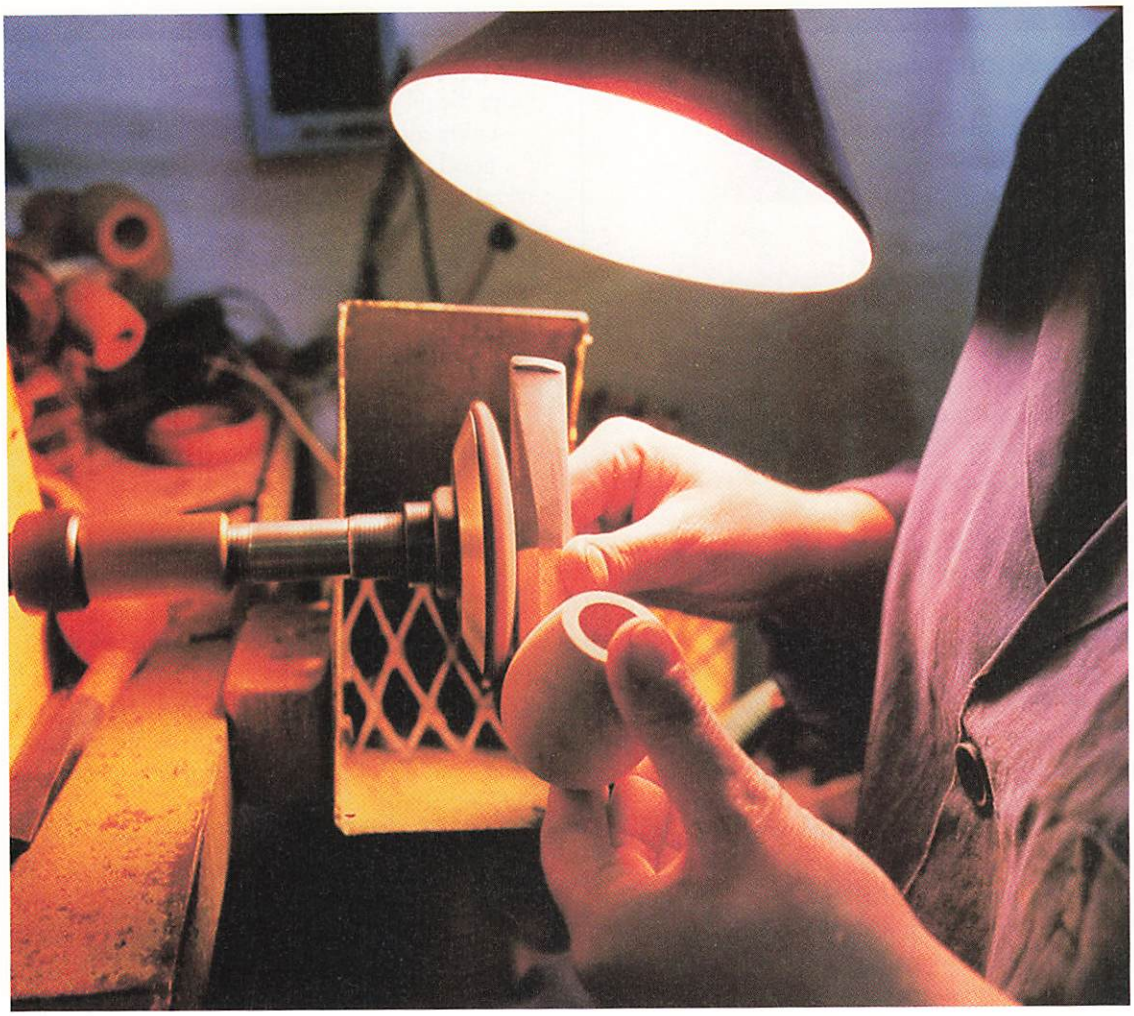
Jucunda pipes are created for individuals who prefer strong smoke. The oil gives an aromatic taste to the briar. The first two or three smokes with a Jucunda pipe may not taste so good, according to Guidi, but after that it adds to the enjoyment of smoking. The process adds two to three months to the manufacturing time.

Ser Jacopo pipes and accessories are distributed in the U.S. by wholesaler Marble Arch, run by Rob Siegel. Siegel has been the representative of Ser Jacopo almost from the company's beginning. He had known Guidi from his Mastro de Paja days and was in Italy looking for him, having heard of his departure from Mastro. Their new business relationship began in 1982. Today, the U.S. ranks third among nations in the purchase of Ser Jacopo pipes, behind Italy and Germany. It may rank higher when only "firsts" are considered. Approximately 1,500 are imported each year and distributed through 150 tobacconists located throughout the country.

"Guidi creates 60 percent classic shapes and 40 percent freehand, many with a Danish touch. However, here in the States, we receive about 80 percent classic and 20 percent freehand," says Siegel. "I believe Ser Jacopo makes the finest classic English shapes today. They have the ability to manufacture the best billiards, Canadians, Lovats, etc., in large sizes. To this Guidi adds the special touches where the shank meets the mouthpiece, in contrasting wood, silver or gold. When he puts the Delecta silver mounts on the classic shapes, they become 'dressed,' but not ostentatious. The classic shapes sell best here. The best selling shape is still the billiard, in all of its various forms.

"The Delecta line has been produced by Ser Jacopo since 1983 and continues to be as popular today as it was 10 years ago. In addition to the Delecta line of mounts, he also produces two other lines—Pulchra and Nauta. Pulchra is similar to Delecta but is more complex, giving it a Turkish or Eastern effect. Nauta is one of Guidi's favorites, the one he often smokes, filling it with tobacco with a heavy Latakia content. It has a Delecta-style mount on a long shank, a Plexiglas tenon and a briar collar. It is styled after a mariner's pipe."

"The straight-grained Gem Series pipes are hard to get because of their scarcity. In the last 15 years, we have had two diamond pipes and three ruby pipes. The lower levels are more available. We get about 125 pieces in the emerald and garnet levels a year and a dozen a year in the sapphire



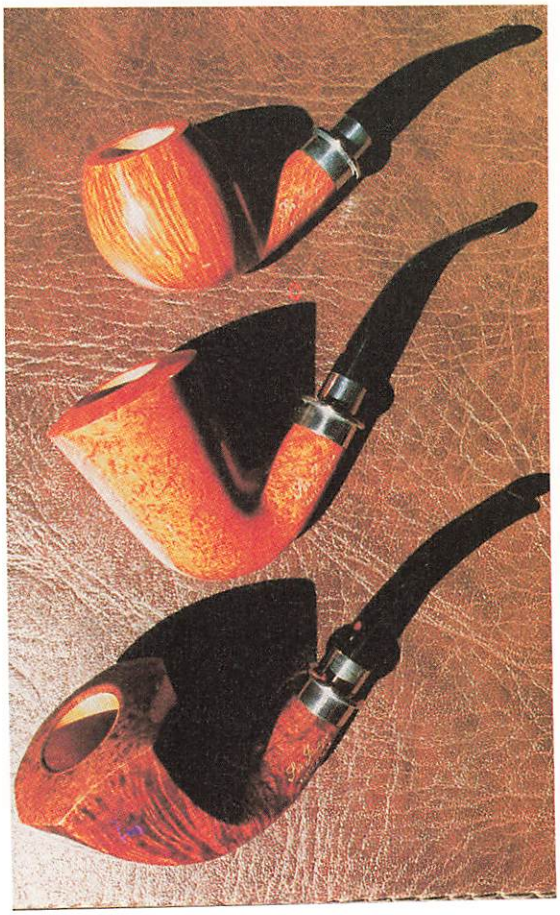
Guidi starts the creative process by cutting a thin slice off each side of a block of briar so the grain becomes evident. He draws freehand the shape of the pipe-to-be on the briar with a marker and then proceeds, as shown, to cut the extraneous wood off with a band saw. Paolo Battistelli does the key steps of drilling the tobacco chamber, mortise and draft hole. After many steps, the pipe ends up in the hands of Fiorella Battistoni who does the finish work with the final, finest grade of sandpaper. To ensure the smoothest possible finish, she stains the exterior of the pipe. Then, as she sands, any uneven areas become evident because of the stain, and are eliminated. Below right are pictured three versions of Ser Jacopo's new Melolontha line, with a ring on the stem facing a ring on the shank. The first shipment of these pipes entered the U.S. in April of this year.

category. The Gem Series consists of beautiful straight-grain pipes, each carrying a gem inset in gold to match its name.

"We also get a special finish here that isn't sold anywhere else in the world. It is a candlewax carved finish, suggested by a pipe smoker in Rowlet, Texas, and carries the slightly fancier name of Rowlette. I like things that clash tastefully, like a Rowlette in a classical billiard shape with cutting edge carving on the bowl. It has sold well in this country.

"The impact Giancarlo Guidi has had on the pipe world is far-reaching," says Siegel. "Of the three great brands of Italian pipes since WWII (Castello, Mastro, Ser Jacopo), he has started two. From him has grown the pipe industry in southern Italy, with numerous other brands being made by craftsmen who trained with Giancarlo. Had he not existed, the pipe industry in Italy would have never reached south of the Po River.

"He has consistently manufactured excellence in pipes for 30-plus years, a record few, if any, other handmakers can approach. I'm talking about an individual who has had true annual production in the thousands, as opposed to hobbyists who produce dozens or hundreds. He has redefined the shape chart of both English and Dan-



Ser Jacopo Nomenclature

Standard line:

R1:	Rustic carved, dark brown or dark plum finish
R2:	Rustic carved, light brown finish
	(Rustic pipes begin at an SRP of $190)
S:	Sandblast, black finish
S1:	Sandblast, dark brown finish
S2:	Sandblast, light brown finish
S3:	Sandblast, tanshell finish
	(Sandblasted pipes begin at an SRP of $200)
Rowlette:	Candle wax carving, light and dark finishes
	(Rowlette pipes begin at an SRP of $260)
L:	Smooth, red, usually with silver trim
L1:	Smooth flame grain, various finishes
L2:	Smooth straight grain, various finishes
L3:	Smooth straight grain extra, discontinued
	(Smooth pipes begin at an SRP of $250 for an L and reach more than $395 for an L2)

Gem Series line:

Quality sequence from low to high: emerald, garnet, sapphire, ruby, diamond. (Each Gem Series pipe has a genuine gemstone corresponding to its grade in an 18k gold setting, mounted in the stem. Gem Series pipe SRP begins at $650 for an emerald and can exceed $4,000 for a diamond.)

Size: (available for additional cost)

Maxima:	Indicates oversized pipe in all grades
Maxima Maxima:	Indicates giant pipe in all grades

Special shank mounts: (available for additional cost)

Delecta:	Briar, silver or gold mounts on shank and stem
Pulchra:	Briar, silver or gold mounts on shank and stem
Nauta:	Briar or silver shank mount with long briar stem
Imago:	Matching silver mounts on shank and stem. Used on smaller pipes.

Additions and options: (available for additional cost)

Silver and 18k gold bands and rings are available on many Ser Jacopo pipes. (Army mount, flush mount or surface mount)

Briar, horn, silver and gold mounts are available on many Ser Jacopo pipes. Detailed micro fusion mounts are available on some models.

Special series or styles:

Domina:	Pipe of the year in a special presentation display. Micro fusion band. Various finishes.
Jucunda:	Sandblasted pipes that have undergone special oil/heat treatment.
Kalabash:	Classic shape often connected with Sherlock Holmes. Various finishes.
Picta Collection:	Series of 14 pipes. Designs from Van Gogh paintings and drawings. In five finishes.
Silver wind caps:	Large bents with handmade silver and briar windcaps.
Flatus:	Series of small silver-banded pipes. Shapes from the 1920s. Various finishes.
Foeda:	Special bullcap with two-way stem. Smoke as bent or straight. Various finishes.
Melolontha:	To be introduced in the third quarter of 1997.

Logo change:

From 1983 until the first part of 1997, Ser Jacopo pipes have used coral dots for identification. Beginning in April 1997, some pipes are arriving in the U.S. with a new identification mark—a stylized serifed silver "J" imbedded in the stem. Soon all new Ser Jacopo pipes delivered will have the "J" trademark instead of the coral dot.

(Note: SRP= Suggested retail price)

ish styles, while adding his own indelible imprint on those which are exclusively his own," concludes Siegel.

Being a pipe smoker, Guidi knows the value of a good pipe tool and has designed and made several styles of pipe tools over the years. More recently, Guidi focused his skills on designing accessories for pipe and cigar smokers. The Guidi designs are turned into finished products by Andrea Pascucci, located one and a half miles away from the workshop in a district of Pesaro near the sea.

Pascucci had no formal training. He started working with wood, then worked iron for a while. For the last year and a half, he has contracted all of his production to Ser Jacopo.

"I have developed a passion for wood," says Pascucci. "I love to work with my hands. In addition to briar, I am also creating many pieces from a wood called Amboina. Briar is a root, and is difficult to work. Amboina, on the other hand, comes from knots or galls that grow on the tree trunk well above the ground. It is easier to work, and the nature of its formation gives it beautiful grain and color."

His love of his work is reflected in the beautiful cigar and pipe holders, ashtrays and combination humidors he creates for Ser Jacopo.

Giancarlo Guidi and Paolo Battistelli are men committed to the creation of pipes. The difficult times they experienced before rising Phoenix-like from the ashes of their previous endeavors, gave Guidi and Battistelli a chance to refocus themselves on their craft—their art.

What about the future? "Times are difficult, now," says Guidi. "There is a belief that smoke makes you ill. In addition, people are always in a hurry these days. Over time, designs may change. Perhaps pipes may become smaller for a shorter smoke.

"We have started making our Flatus line, which are small briars similar to Dunhills from early in the century. We have also developed a pipe called the Foeda, which is a bullcap that has a stem that can be turned so the pipe smokes as either a straight or partial bent. (There are two coral dots on the stem since there is no incorrect way of smoking this pipe.)

"Despite the recent past, things tend to be cyclical, and we've already seen increased demand from the U.S. and Germany. Pipes will survive everything. There is definitely a future for pipes, but as we've seen from our past, it may be a different future." ***P&T***

If your local tobacconist does not carry or cannot special order a Ser Jacopo pipe, ask for the name of the dealer most convenient to you: Rob Siegel, Marble Arch, Ltd., P.O. Box 966, Rockville Centre, NY 11571. Fax: 516.536.9781.

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The road less traveled

J.T. Cooke is an extraordinary pipemaker with a reputation for unsurpassed stem replacements. The problem is finding him

by Chuck Stanion

When I telephoned J.T. Cooke to request an interview, he was friendly and cooperative, but questioned my sanity. "You know this is February, don't you," he said, "and that I live in Vermont?"

I told him I'd heard how bad the weather could be—I do, after all, watch CNN—but that I would not be intimidated or dissuaded from my literary goal. *P&T* readers wanted his story, and that was more important than my personal comfort.

"I was thinking more of your safety than comfort. Ever drive on black ice?" he asked. "Where are you?"

"Raleigh," I said. "North Carolina."

"And what's the temperature there?"

"Well, it's been pretty darn cold. This morning I actually had to scrape some frost off part of my windshield with a credit card. And it's still only in the 40s. No problem with a good parka and electric socks, though."

"Uh, huh...and are you a native Carolinian?"

"No, just moved up from Tampa."

"Yes, I see." There was a diplomatic pause. "Listen, I want to do the interview, but maybe we should wait till spring. There's no predicting this weather. I mean, I can't see my truck through the window right now for the snow, and last count there were four squirrels and two Jehovah's Witnesses frozen to the front steps. I highly advise you rethink this."

Maybe he had a point. The coldest I'd been in the last 20 years was the day I accidently set the air-conditioning to 70. But, I reasoned, I wouldn't be outside more than a moment at a time.

"I can arrive Sunday and see you first thing Monday."

"Right. Give me a call when you get here."

* * *

The drive from the airport to my hotel—which was 25 miles from Cooke's home but still the nearest civilization—was surprisingly uneventful. There was only an inch of snow on the ground, the road was dry, and I was feeling pretty good about my skills as an arctic explorer. Sure, I'd lost a couple of fingers to frostbite when I filled the gas tank, but my all-wheel-drive rental car had a good heater and easily handled the one frozen patch I'd traversed before smashing into the mailbox at the hotel entrance. Once in my room I called Cooke.

"Where are you now?" he asked.

"The only hotel within a hundred miles of you," I said. "The Igloo Lodge on Frozen Corpse Road."

"I know right where it is. I'll come get you in the morning."

"That's OK, the roads are clear. Just give me directions."

"Well, no, I'll sleep better if I know I'm coming after you in the four-wheel drive. I'd hate for you to die of exposure or be eaten by bears."

"Ha, ha, bears. Bears? Really? OK, you're the boss. See you tomorrow." I thought he was probably kidding around, but let me state right here that J.T. Cooke saved my life by not letting me try to hunt him out. Daniel Boone couldn't have found this guy; Lewis and Clark would have perished in the attempt. J.T. Cooke lives so far up in the mountains of Vermont that satellites can photograph his house without telephoto lenses.

But of course I exaggerate—satellites could never find Cooke's house under the glacier it's carved into.

* * *

Waiting in the lobby the next morning, I hallucinated that my college roommate from the '60s walked in. "Hey, Depthcharge," I said, astonished. "I thought you were dead."

"That you, Chuck?" said the apparition. "I'm J.T. Cooke."

He had long dark hair and wore blue-

jeans, motorcycle boots and a leather jacket. He looked like a biker turned rock musician turned pipemaker. "Welcome to Vermont," he said, extending his hand. "We better go, it's starting to snow a little."

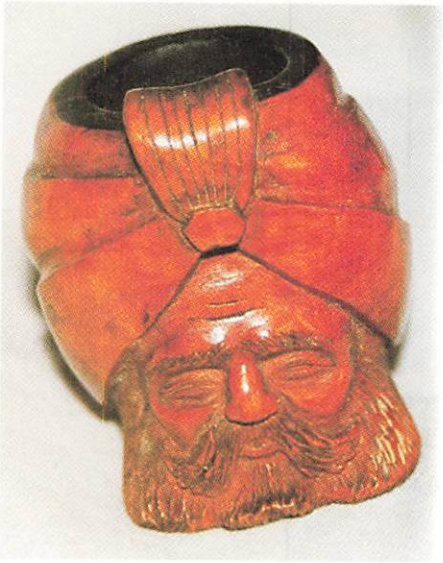
"So," I asked as we climbed into his truck, "what do you like to do besides make pipes?"

"I mainly like to ride motorcycles and play electric guitar. But pipemaking and repairs take up most of my time these days."

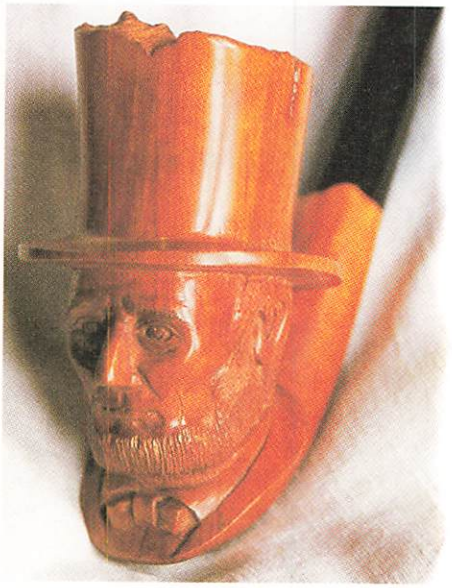
From there I thought it best that Cooke concentrate on his driving, but he chatted breezily and contentedly along, unconcerned that visibility was being drastically reduced by heavier and heavier snow. Every time the road forked, we took the road less traveled, until we were following just one set of tire prints, left by Cooke when he came down the mountain for me.

We took a left, a right, a couple more rights, and three or four lefts until I had no idea of direction—except for up. We always went up. And as we climbed what pass for roads in Vermont—really just

The home J.T. and Deb Cooke built from scratch has a beautiful view—if it's not snowing too hard. J.T.'s workshop is located in the basement where it shares space with a half-dozen motorcycles.



The first pipe J.T. made is shown at the top. As the spirit moves him, he produces other excellent carved heads.



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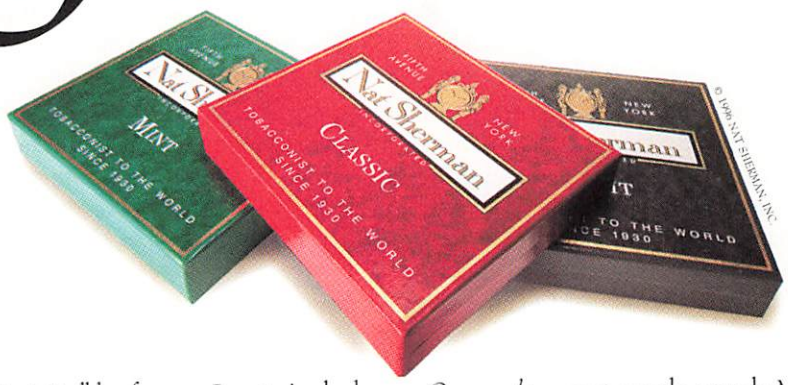

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The Calabash-style sandblast is a special order pipe for a regular customer. The tamper is one of only a few Cooke has made. "They're really too much trouble to get right," he says, "and they are not at all cost-effective."

goat-paths cut into the sides of mountains—the snow got deeper, the road icier, and the slope steeper.

There were no guardrails, and I gathered no comfort from the occasional single strand of rusted wire that used to be a fence nailed to the trees along the roadside. Even in four-wheel-drive the truck slid and bucked as Cooke negotiated troughs of frozen tire tracks. I gazed out the window at the drop, but wasn't worried. Cooke was a good driver, and if we went off the road I would have plenty of time to write my will before we hit bottom.

Finally Cooke stopped the truck and put it in reverse. To my amazement and horror, he started to back at high speed into a huge snowbank. We rammed it hard, and broke through into what may have been a driveway under two feet of snow. There was Cooke's house behind us. "C'mon in," he said. "I'll show you around."

* * *

J.T. Cooke made his first pipe in 1972, when he gave up cigarettes. His wife, Deb (the "D" in J.T.&D. Cooke Pipes), found a pre-bored block of briar for him at the local pipe shop, and he started smoking it. "I'm walking around with this big ugly block of briar hanging out of my mouth," he says, "smoking the hell out of it, thinking, well now what? So I started some side drawings for it, and eventually carved it out."

Most people, having made the decision to try pipe smoking, go out and buy one, but that concept escaped Cooke. "It never occurred to me not to make a pipe."

He still has that first pipe, and although it looks like the work of a highly experienced artisan, it's the first wood carving he had ever tried. At that time he was a commercial artist for a television station, and had done a little sculpting, but had no pipemaking experience.

"I'd seen my dad make a few pipes, though," says Cooke. "He made them for himself, not to sell. Pipes were just one more thing among the thousands of other things he made." He shakes his head in admiration. "I never saw anything he couldn't make, from camera parts to a house to grinding lenses for a telescope—one of those guys who could make anything he set his mind to. He was a schoolteacher, and he also had that special mechanical knack.

"He came from a family that didn't know one end of a hammer from the other, so I don't know where he got it. And he taught himself everything. For instance, he bought a junk lathe made at the end of World War II, and it was missing a bunch of parts. So my dad taught himself to make those parts and got it working. I still use that lathe for making pipes; it works perfectly. I wish I could teach myself that way."

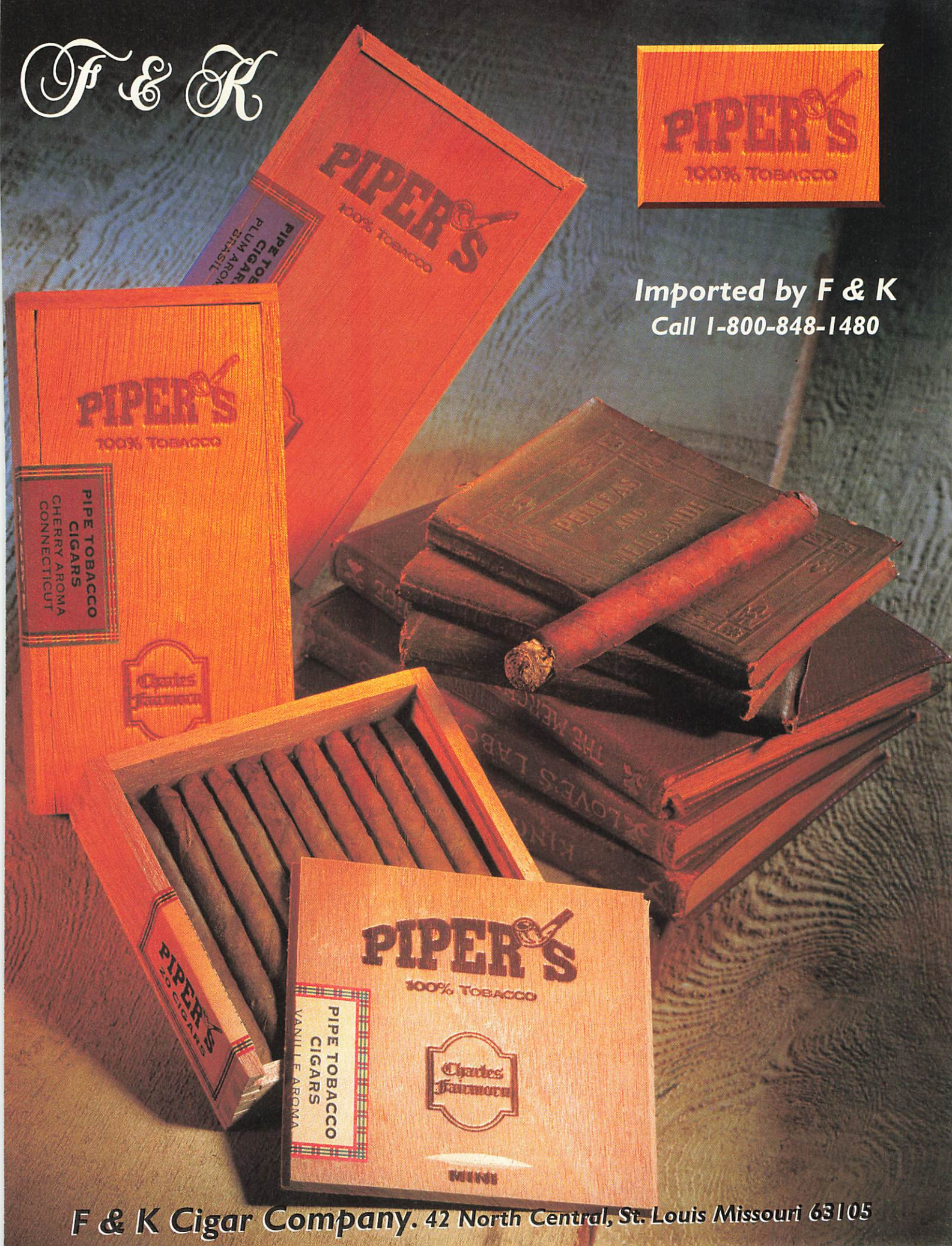
Cooke has inherited more from his father than he gives himself credit for. He and Deb, for example, built their house from scratch. Cooke laughs it off: "We only did that because it's all we could afford at the time." But it is a very nice home, with a two-level ground floor, handcrafted cabinetry, an unbelievable view, and a cramped little claustrophobic basement where Cooke has jammed a half-dozen motorcycles and a pipemaking workshop into a space the size of an '81 Buick.

His shop contains the lathe his father customized for him, a drill press and a buffing wheel, a sandblasting chamber, a small workbench, a space heater, and almost enough oxygen to sustain a gerbil. It's an efficient, streamlined operation, because he can't take more than three steps in any direction. But from this minute shop emerge some of the finest pipes and handcrafted pipestems produced today.

J.T.&D. Cooke smooth pipes are flawlessly finished. "And I now have a source for very high grade briar," says Cooke. "It's awfully expensive, but when a client orders a straight grain now, I'm more likely to produce one first try, without having to go through block after block, making pipe after pipe, hoping the next one will be straight grain. It is extraordinary briar—but I have to charge more for the pipes, since I'm paying about eight times as much for the blocks."

The sandblasted pipes Cooke produces exhibit a beautiful, deep cragginess that seems almost a rustication. The sandblasting chamber is only a two-foot cube, connected to an air tank and compressor. "I of course don't use sand," says Cooke, lifting the lid of the sandblasting chamber to reveal its inner workings. "After years of experimentation, I finally discovered the best material was—well, I'd rather you not print it, but it's ****." [Note: the symbol "*****" denotes information that Cooke prefers not be revealed. He has invested tens of thousands of hours developing techniques and materials, and would like to take advantage of his own hard work. His lucite reproduction-amber stem material, for instance, which he casts into rods from a clear liquid, took 15 years of almost daily experimentation to perfect.]

"I use number **** grit at **** psi, and the result is very satisfactory." Sandblasting is much more complex than just spraying a pipe. "It's almost impossible to see what you're doing," says Cooke, picking up a handful of grit and letting it sift through his fingers. "You have to set up the pipe, spray it for just a moment, let everything settle and the pressure come back up, and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With a national reputation, the Cookes take stem replacement very seriously, demanding perfection.

do it again. It's a very precise process. A sandblasted pipe takes at least two more hours to make than a smooth pipe."

Cooke has produced pipes for several major pipemakers over the years, from roughing out standard shapes to near-final finishing. "It's a living," he says, shrugging his shoulders. "I don't get credit for them, but my pipes are out there. I've even seen my pipes in *Pipes & tobaccos*, under other makers' names." He won't reveal which ones, however. "It's not a big deal," he says. "It's really quite common in this business. Everyone has somewhat specialized equipment, and it's a pain to reconfigure everything to accommodate particular shapes. So I help out. It's really how Deb and I got started."

The Cookes roughed out many of the bulldogs for Mike Butera in the mid-'80s, when Barry Levin was marketing Butera Pipes. At that time Butera was doing most of his work with a drill press, so there were shapes that were awkward for him. "We just turned blank pieces of wood for Mike, and did the rough shaping for about two or three years," says Cooke. "There was no final finishing, so they were about halfway done. Mike did all the rest of the sanding and all of the stem work.

"Before that we did pipes for Elliot Nachwalter, Wilkes, Pipeworks, Pipeworks at Wilkes, Briar Workshop—ten or fifteen thousand pipes."

J.T.&D. also put out a line of pipes for Levin Pipes International. "We sold maybe 1,000 or 1,500 of those," says Cooke. It was the mid-'80s when they connected with Barry Levin, and through him started the pipe-reconditioning phase of their business.

"I saw an article in PCI's *Pipe Smoker* magazine on **** ****, whom Deb and I had been supplying with pipes for years, tens of thousands of pipes. He was our main source of income. And we were doing everything on those pipes, except the final finishing and waxing and stem bending, but in this story he substantially said he was doing everything on his pipes. Well, I had steam coming out of my ears. I mean, Deb and I were up here freezing our butts off doing all that work for next to nothing, and this **** was ego-tripping.

"But there was also a small ad in that issue for Levin Pipes, just an hour away from here. I said, Whoa, what's this? and called." Barry Levin drove to Cooke's house, and they discovered they needed each other.

"So I started doing the restoration work for LPI, and we were able to stop making pipes for that other fellow." As Levin's customers gradually became more sophisticated and demanding of high quality, he would turn the technical problems over to Cooke, "and I learned as I went."

Cooke has been fiddling with a stem at his workbench, but now he sets it down. "We worked together right up to the day he died," says Cooke, and pauses for a long time. "I still miss Barry an awful lot," he says, looking at nothing in particular. "You'll have to excuse me. I'll be right back."

Levin and Cooke agreed from the beginning that reproduction stems should be marked as such. They did not want collectors to be confused, and perhaps pay a premium for a pipe without an original stem. So the stems were marked with a small "R."

But they discovered that unscrupulous individuals could easily buff the "R" off, and pass off the reproduction stems as original. From that point, the name "Cooke" was engraved at the base of the stem, where it would be invisible when the pipe was fully assembled, but easily found when taken apart, and where it would ruin the stem to buff it off.

The two also agreed that the original nomenclature on a pipe should be sacred—nothing could be done to risk it. In the reconditioning and cleaning process, nomenclature is never touched.

About a minute has passed since Cooke excused himself when the wooden door swings open and he re-enters the shop. "I'm a little embarrassed," he says, sitting down again. "But Barry Levin—well, he changed the direction of my life. He was a giant; I mean, now there are shows and clubs, and a big glossy consumer's magazine, all covering pipes, and I don't think any of that would be here without Barry. He really popularized pipe collecting."

The restoration of thousands of Levin pipes was a terrific education for Cooke. Much more than just reaming and

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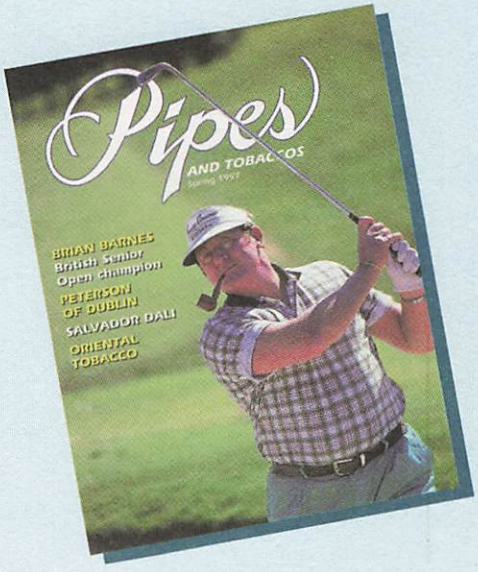

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cleaning, J.T.&D. Pipes can restain and refinish, remove scratches and dings, repair gouges, plug burned-out bowls, and reconstruct mangled and broken pipes. They also provide a "topping" service, which will match color and finish on a smooth or sandblast, remove tar deposits, and polish to new condition.

The Cookes take their stem replacements very seriously as well, demanding perfection and often replacing stems with hand-cut versions superior to the originals. "The stem of a pipe is not an afterthought," says their brochure; it's as integral and essential to the pipe as the bowl is.

And with the success of his reproduction amber, Cooke now does a significant business in replacement stems for and restoration of meerschaum pipes. "This lucite reproduction-amber has a number of advantages over real amber," he says. "Amber is very brittle, and it's virtually impossible to find quality amber. The stuff you can get is bloody expensive, it's a nuisance to work, it's gorgeous material but it's really impractical. It's like working on glass."

Cooke also finds himself making quite a number of special-order pipes. Clients often ask for duplicates of favorite pipes, or if they've found a pipe that's great for them, but they wish the bowl was a little different shape or the shank longer, Cooke can do that as well.

But perhaps the most inspiring service that J.T.&D. Pipes offers is the manufacture of pipes designed by everyday pipe smokers with an idea. Clients send Cooke sketches of design ideas they have, and Cooke tweaks them, offers suggestions, and puts together the pipes his customers dream of. Smokers can have the satisfaction of smoking a pipe of their own design, made to exact or general specifications as they wish. But whether they order a J.T.&D. design, or design their own pipe, or have a pipe reproduced, they can be sure of getting a wonderful smoking pipe.

Here's why Cooke pipes are so good: He has repaired and refinished tens of thousands of pipes made by the finest craftsmen in the world. And as these pipes pass through his shop, he notes what works and what doesn't. Cooke sees the design flaws—and successes—of the major manufacturers and small artisans, and has gradually incorporated the best design qualities into his own pipes.

"When you have to fix something that has gone wrong with a pipe," he says,

REPLACEMENT PIPE STEMS

J.T.&D. Cooke can provide replacement pipe stems as listed below. Replacement stems run from $20 to $40, depending on size, material and complexity. For example, stems over one-half inch wide or three inches long are slightly more expensive. Remember that Cooke is probably able to do anything you need, so if your pipe is not listed here, call him.

Reproduction Amber	Color and lip-button matching provided; tenons machined from nylon or delrin
Comoy's "C"	Not a stamp, but a multi-cut inlaid "C"
Barling	(vulcanite) Cross stamp or restamp
Charatan	(vulcanite) CP stamp, restamp, and double comfort bit available
Dunhill	(vulcanite) White spot, small or large
Ashton	(black vulcanite only) Metal/wood dot
Sasieni	(vulcanite) 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 or 8 dots
Kaywoodie	(vulcanite) Original stem must be provided for removal of drinkless male metal fitting. Inlaid white club, inlaid black club and "all briar" stems with double inlaid logo
Vesz	(vulcanite) White circle
Castello	(lucite) Black with white bar, briar inlay with white bar, black with diamond inlay
Ser Jacopo	(lucite) Black with colored dot, briar inlay & dot
Radice	(lucite) 2 dots, colored inlay spliced from your old stem & dots
Baldi	(lucite) White inlay
Caminetto	(black lucite) One-piece gold mustache stamp
Talamona	(lucite) Black with white circle
Larsen	(vulcanite) Round taper, saddle or fancy cut
Savinelli	(vulcanite) 1 brass dot, additional dots and Autograph with handcut signature logo
GBD	(black vulcanite or lucite) Old stem must be provided as donor for metal logo, large and regular inlaid logo
Don Carlos	(lucite) White bar
Taylor Made	(vulcanite) Wood dot
Mastro de Paja	(lucite) Large metal dot

"you get an intense perspective into the smallest details. You have to ask yourself what this bevel adds to the pipe, why this lip button is such a shape, why this draft hole is a specific diameter, why the tobacco chamber is a particular dimension. And you start to see what makes a pipe successful, what makes it smoke well and last. And you see design failures—some pipe designs, for example, burn out in the same place in pipe after pipe." Cooke is in a unique position; he is witness to the triumphs and failures of the finest pipes made, and has taken advantage of this experience in designing his own pipes.

He has also developed his own process for curing briar. "I worked on a way to remove the impurities, essentially by percolating the tars and oils out of the briar. Mike Butera uses a similar process, as do several other pipemakers. It's along the lines of the old Dunhill method, where they use oil to push out the impurities, although I don't use oil. If I want oil I'll order a salad.

"After the wood has been machined, regardless of the source or the manufacturer, there are still residual oils and tars in the wood, and they have got to go. The pipe should be a neutral medium. I get rid of as much flavor—and as much weight—as absolutely possible. I don't want people tasting oil, I don't want them tasting briar—I want them tasting their tobacco."

Approximately 100 pipes a year are produced with the J.T.&D. Cooke stamp. Most of them are special orders, but a few trickle into the market. "I send out photos to my regular clients when I get a few pipes stocked," says Cooke. "They don't generally last long." He doesn't distribute through retailers because he just doesn't make enough pipes for that. He prefers, he says, to deal "directly with the client. I like to personalize the details—the shape of the mouthpiece, its exact dimensions, the balance of the pipe. You can't do that with mass marketing." So if you want a Cooke Pipe, you'll have to call Cooke directly. Just be prepared for your pipe to take between two and six months, since there is a constant waiting list. Refurbishing, repair and restoration take a little less time, typically four to eight weeks.

Since Cooke is clearly able to produce quality pipes that are equal to or better than most pipes available, it is puzzling that he specializes in replacement stems and pipe reconditioning. But Cooke attributes that not so much to preference as to necessity.

"I think I'm a better craftsman and pipemaker than businessman," he says. "I'm not a schmoozer, I'm not a politicker, I don't like going to shows—I'd rather be home, even if that means making less money. I'd rather make and recondition pipes the way I do now than put up with the **** required to make more money—which, by the way, I do not equate with being more 'successful.'" But pipe reconditioning is an important service to provide the industry, and Cooke is one of the best.

"I treat a Kaywoodie the same way I do the rarest Dunhill. I remember a guy who was quite a collector, but of all the pipes he had, the most important to him sentimentally was a pipe he picked up in World War II. It was just a cheap basket pipe," says Cooke, picking up a broken pipe as illustration.

"It was in rocky shape—just fragments, really—but he wanted it restored, which I did—put it back together in good smoking order, new stem, ream and clean, took out the dings and the scratches. Now to anyone else on the planet that was a totally worthless pipe, but to him it was the most valuable pipe in the world."

He holds up another pipe, a Barling in brilliant revitalized condition. "So I treat all the pipes that come in here the same: as the most important and valuable pipe the owner possesses." *P&T*

Cooke Pipes

J.T.&D. Pipes have no nomenclature, except for the Cooke stamp. No-frills sandblasts start at $125, and increase in price according to materials and time invested. Smooth pipes start at approximately $150, and increase in price according to materials and grain quality.

Pipe Repair and Refurbishing Services

Many local pipe shops offer cleaning and refurbishing services, or can send your pipe out to services that deal exclusively with retailers. Here are a few other options:

J.T.&D. Cooke
RFD 1, Box 1022
East Fairfield, VT 05448-9801
802.849.6272

Matt's Pipe Rejuvenation Co.
283 Columbus Street
Suite 116
Denver, CO 80206
303.316.7177

Sherlock's Haven
275 Battery Street
San Francisco, CA 94111
415.362.1405

American Smoking Pipe Company
HC-88 Box 223
30 Tall Oaks
Pocono Lake, PA 18347
http://AmSmoke.com

Tim West Inc.
1588 Grayling Ct.
Columbus, OH 43235
http://lioncrest.com/timwest.briar.pipes/repair.html

Bill's Pipe Repair
2909 SW 52nd Place
Oklahoma City, OK 73119
405.682.1558

Pipes Unlimited
19 Auburn Ave
Utica, NY 13501

Brigham Enterprises Inc.
25 Ripley Ave.
Toronto, Ontario
M6S 3P2
800.668.0628

Unger's Pipe Refurbishing and Writing Consultation
800 Franklin Ave.
Columbus, OH 43205
614.252.2904

Jim Benjamin
12199 Avenida Consentido
San Diego, CA 92128
619.674.4900
(Cleaning only. See article on page 66.)

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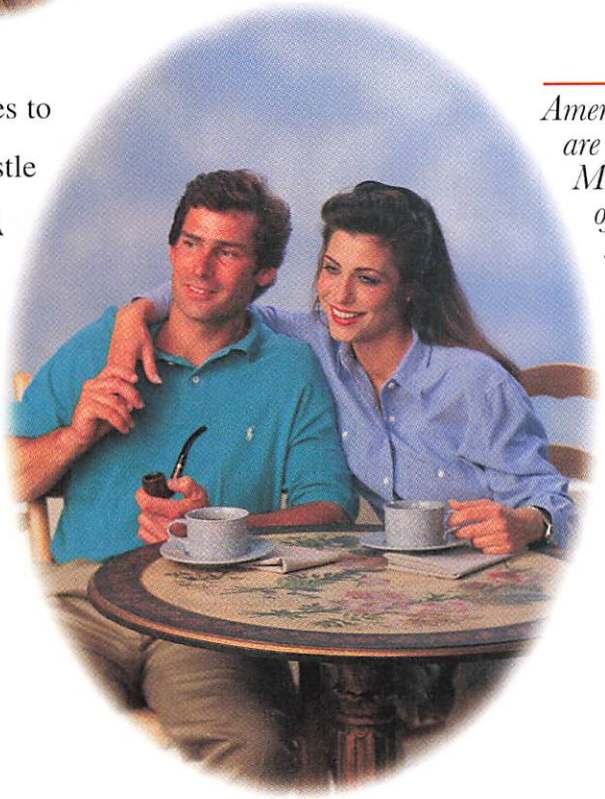

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Pipe Club of London

Carolina Briar Friars
1997 Deep South Classic Pipe & Cigar Smokers' Convention, May 3-4. Government House Hotel, Charlotte, North Carolina. No admission charge. Tables $40. Pipe collections, tobacco samples, free appraisals, trading, pipemaking demonstration, door prizes, entertainment. For more information, call Gibb Robinson at 704.372.1041.

Chicagoland Pipe Collectors Club
1997 International Pipe Show, April 19-20, 1997. Ramada Inn, Harvey, Illinois. More than 150 tables of exhibitors, collectors, and dealers in antique pipes, briar pipes, tobacciana, cigars and tobaccos. For more information, call Frank P. Burla at 630.961.0156.

Conclave of Richmond Pipe Smokers (CORPS)
Annual pipe show in October. Richmond, Virginia. For more information, call Linwood Hines at 804.342.0761.

Dallas/Fort Worth Pipe Smokers Club
This club meets at 7:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of every month at the Londoner Tavern, 4291 Belt Line Road, Addison, Texas. Contact Ed Price, *epr065@airmail.net.*

South Florida Briar Brotherhood
The South Florida Briar Brotherhood meets the third Thursday of each month at 8 p.m. in the loft of Turtle Run Liquors, located at 9711 West Sample Road, Coral Springs, Florida. There is no charge to attend the meeting. The club has a free monthly newsletter called *Smoke Signals.* To be put on the mailing list or for further club information, please contact Ed Faerman at 3606 NW 84th Avenue, Suite 100, Coral Springs, FL 33065 or email at *emf1@bellsouth.net.* (Note: The fourth character in the email address is the numeral one and not an "L.")

Indiana Pipe/Tobacco and Cigar Aficionado Club
A new organization, IPTCAC will offer a quarterly newsletter and plans to schedule two shows a year. Dues are $15 per year. For further information, contact Gary Stone or Tony Rairden. Phone: 317.642.7784; fax: 317.642.0227; address: P.O. Box 2368, Anderson, IN 46018-2368.

The Pipe Club of London
9 Frances Street
Chesham Buckinghamshire HP5 3EQ
England
Telephone 01494 771159
Facsimile 01494 583293

Dear Dayton,

Our good friend Tom Dunn was kind enough to send us the premiere edition of *Pipes & tobaccos.* Congratulations! It's a superb production—and a damn good read. Just what our hobby needs.

You ask for information on pipe clubs, so here're some details on the Pipe Club of London.

First off, let it be known the "Pipe Club of London" is a bloody silly name for our Club, because most of our members don't live in London. We now have getting on for 600 members, scattered throughout more than 30 countries around the Globe. It was once suggested that we adopt a more appropriate name, in order to reflect our widespread international memberships—but no dice. Having been established for more than 26 years, we're pretty well set in our ways. So the Pipe Club of London we remain.

We believe that the Pipe Club of London is the largest and oldest established noncommercial pipe club in the world.

We hold meetings every month (at the Royal British Legion, Grotto Passage, off Paddington Street, London), but as most of our members are unable to attend them, we try our best to make membership worthwhile in other ways, too.

We publish a magazine twice a year, organize trips to pipe factories and other places of interest, negotiate discounts from manufacturers and retailers and organize exclusive offers for our members. Current offers include Christmas Pipes from Invicta Briars and the Pipe Club of London Pipe-of-the-Year, made by Don Carlos of Italy. Naturally, we also offer Club regalia such as ties, badges, etc.

In June, a bunch of us will be flying to Italy to join in the celebration of Pipe Brebbias's 50th anniversary, and in August, our "Peter Bersey Shield" pipe smoking competition will be held in the London Dunhill showroom—quite an honour!

Annual membership of the Pipe Club of London costs (for U.S. residents) $20 per year subject to a one-off joining fee of $12. Alternately, 12 years membership can be had for $200.

I've put a copy of our latest magazine in the post to you. In the meantime, if there is anything else you would like to know about us, or if we can help you in any way, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Happy pipe smoking!
Clive Humm
The Pipe Club of London

Forty-ninth International Association of Pipe Smokers Clubs Show
One-day event at the St. Louis Holiday Inn, Nov. 8, 1997. Retailers' and collectors' tables, a dinner the evening of the eighth and a smoking contest with trophies going to the top five places. For further information, contact Jay Milton at 314.837.5902.

New York Pipe Club
Meets the first Tuesday of every month at Muldoon's Pub, 3rd Ave between 43rd and 44th Streets, at 6 p.m. Dues: $2 per meeting. For further information contact S. Jack, 212.288.3832.

The North American Society of Pipe Collectors
Newly christened, the NASPC was formerly the Ohio Pipe Collectors. 150 members in 23 states and Canada. Annual show this Sept. 27 at the Holiday Inn, 328 W. Lane Ave., Columbus, Ohio. For more information or a complimentary newsletter, call Bill Unger at 614.252.2904 or *ohio@pipes.org*.

Philadelphia Pipe Club
Meets the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at Chris' Jazz Cafe, 1421 Swansom St.

Sherlock Holmes Pipe Club
Meets every second Wednesday at the Holiday Inn, Mansfield, Massachusetts. For further information contact Don Powers, 617.449.0380.

Southwest Pipe and Cigar League
Annual pipe show (West Coast Pipe & Cigar Expo) held in summer in Los Angeles, California. For more information, call Steve Johnson at 310.820.9706.

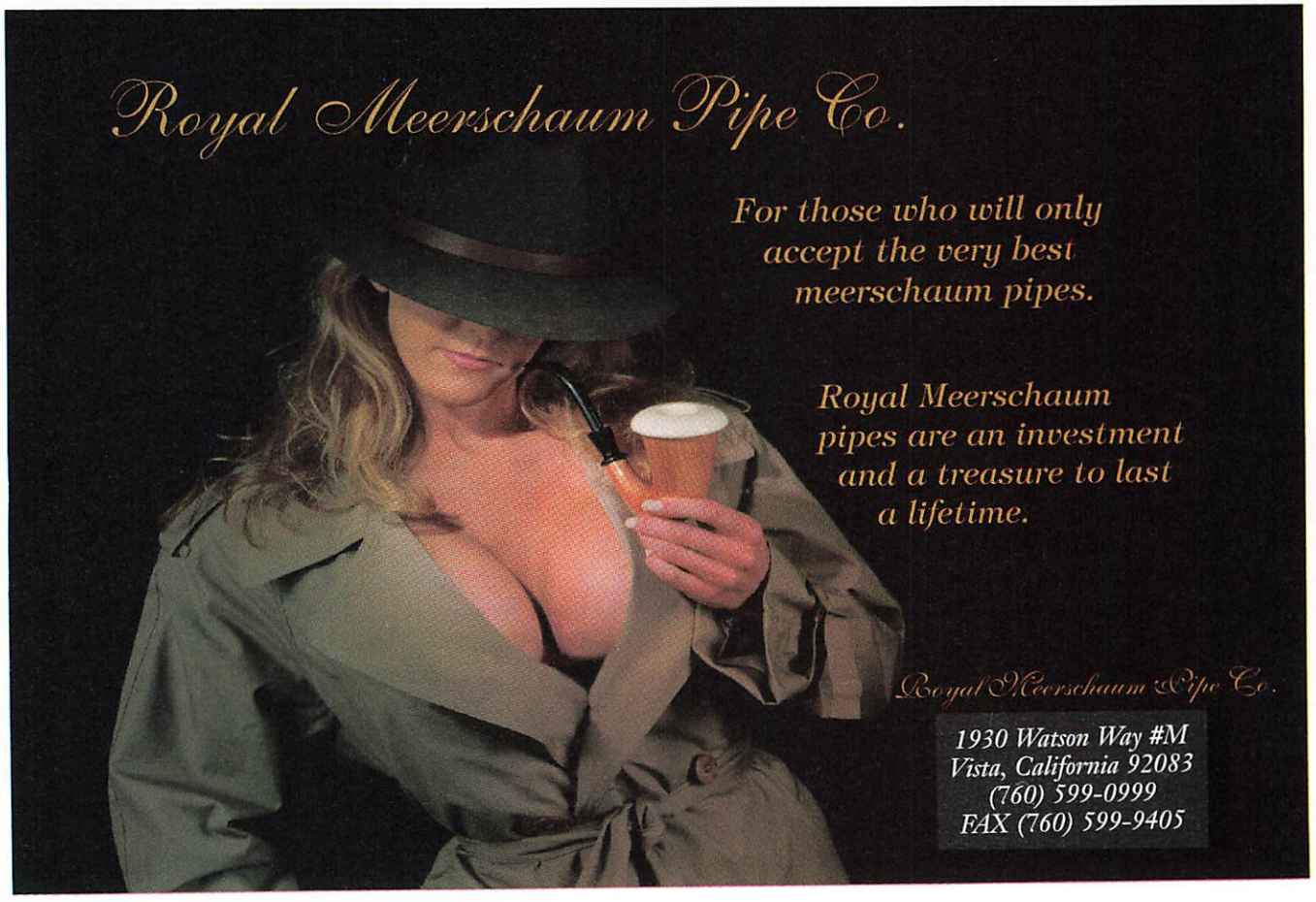
Tampa Bay Pipe Club
Meeting days vary but are held during the last week of each month, after store hours at The Tobacconist, 119 Bullard Parkway, Temple Terrace, FL 33617. For further information, contact John Sabia, 813.989.3133.

Triangle Area Pipe Smokers (TAPS)
Monthly dinner meetings, alternating between Raleigh and Durham, North Carolina. For further information, call Chuck Stanion, 919.872.5040, or fax 919.876.6531.

University of Washington Dairy and Briar Club
Meetings are on the University of Washington campus on Fridays at 1:30 p.m. There is a $5 membership fee. Members are awarded a free "starter pipe," and meet weekly to drink 2 percent milk and smoke. For more information, contact Joseph L. Sheedy, *sheedyj@u.washington.edu* or *briarclub@u.washington.edu*.

Wisconsin Briar Friars
Pipe and cigar smokers club. Contact Mark Herman, 1613 N. Peach, Marshfield, WI 54449.

To have your club listed in *P&T*, please send pertinent information to *Pipes and tobaccos*, 3000 Highwoods Blvd., Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27604-1029.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A pipemaking kit is a good place to start when making your first pipe.

PIPEMAKING

for the rank amateur

by Robert Everett

When he learned that I had created a handful of briar pipes during the last couple of months, Bill Unger, of the North American Society of Pipe Collectors, asked me to render my experiences and any hints developed while making pipes for the education and enlightenment of the membership. Being even more of an amateur at writing than I am at pipemaking, I must ask your forbearance as you read on.

I have been a pipe smoker and in a small way a collector for the last 40 years or so. During that time, I frequently wondered while I admired or smoked some pipemaker's masterpiece if such creativity was within reach of the average bloke (read "me"). The answer was, for a long time, No way, man!

Last Christmas, however, Harold Berlin, my best buddy of some 30 years and also a pipe smoker, threw me a real curve. Over the years, he and I had frequently discussed the various attributes of a successful pipe, both artistically and as a good smoke, and had wondered, given the materials and the time, if we could make a pipe of professional quality. Harold ended the speculation by presenting me with a briar block and a stem blank as a Christmas gift, along with a challenge to get off the dime and make a pipe. I headed for the shop to see what I could come up with.

After about 12 hours of work, I held in my hands my first pipe, a Danish-style freehand with plateau (that is, the rough, naturally knobby surface of the briar) bowl top and stem end, similar in shape and style to various Ben Wades and Preben Holms that are among the favorites of my small collection. I'm sure I was guided, albeit unknowingly, in shaping that first pipe by some of the attributes I had admired while handling and smoking the pipes of the Danish masters.

Filled with pride, I rushed to show my creation to Hal. He was stunned!

Well, I want you to know that this initial success created a monster. I rushed an order for a supply of briar blocks and assorted stem blanks and haven't looked back since.

The thing that really amazed me is that making pipes really isn't all that difficult. All one needs are a few basic tools, the pipe materials and a plan of action.

Basic tools—I'll describe a minimum tool set and then mention a few special tools that might make the job easier or more pleasurable. But one can get by easily with a vise, a square, a small saw (coping saw or hacksaw), assorted files, assorted sandpaper and an electric hand drill with assorted bits. I am fortunate to have a small Shopsmith combination lathe, a bench grinder, a bench motor with tapered spindles for wire and buffing wheels and, most useful of all, a Foredom flex-shaft hobby tool with a large assortment of cutting, grinding and polishing accessories. I use these tools because I have them in the shop, but one could easily get by with the basic list.

Pipe materials—Since my pipemaking experience is limited to a handful of briar pipes, predominantly freehands, I'll stick to briar in outlining the materials necessary. Basically, two materials—briar and stem stock—are needed to construct a pipe. These, however, are available in many different forms and qualities. Most experts advise beginners to start with an ebauchon for their initial few forays into pipemaking because ebauchons are typically cut in a size and shape to facilitate making a pipe, and being from the inner, less desirable part of the burl, they are cheaper.

Here is where I differ from the accepted philosophy. I use only extra-grade plateaux. They cost a few dollars more but are vastly more likely to yield a pipe with beautiful grain and excellent smoking characteristics. My thinking is that if I'm going to spend 8 to 12 hours creating a pipe, why start with a $5-$6 ebauchon, when, for $14 or $18, I can start with an extra-grade plateau that will maximize my possibilities for creating a truly nice pipe?

Enough about wood; let's talk stem or mouthpiece materials. Most briar pipe stems are composed of vulcanite (hard rubber, also occasionally referred to as ebonite or vulcanite) or acrylic. Acrylic is referred to by several proprietary names. The most common is DuPont's Lucite, but also encountered are Perspex by Imperial Chemical Industries, Plexiglass by Rohm & Haas and Acrylite by Ameri-

can Cyanamid. Both vulcanite and acrylic are available in rods of varying diameters from which the craftsman can produce pipe stems of any desired shape and size. Doing so requires a lathe or drilling jig because the stems must be drilled, shaped, sanded and polished. The beginner is probably better served by purchasing preshaped vulcanite stem blanks made in presses that require only final shaping, sanding, bending (if desired) and polishing. They are available in a wide variety of styles and sizes both for standard shaped pipes and freehands.

Plan of action—Before actually starting to form your pipe from the briar plateau, I advise you to prepare a plan of action, which will be controlled to a large degree by the size, shape and grain characteristics of the particular block you are working with. To get a good idea of what lies within the bark-covered, rough-sawn plateau, I recommend first cleaning it up a bit.

The outer surface's bark covering can be readily removed by vigorously applying a wire brush or a wire wheel on a drill or bench motor. I've used both methods and recommend the mechanical version, if you have the equipment, as it is much quicker and less difficult. One must wear eye protection because the bark and small bits of wire are shed from the wheel with projectile force. I wear a full-face shield while engaging in this process, and I frequently hear the resounding "ping" of some errant bit of wire bouncing from the shield—much better than finding it stuck in my face!

Have no fear that the wire wheel will deface the plateau surface, leaving it unsuited for use as a handsome knobby pipe top or stem end. The briar is tough enough that only the bark is removed, leaving a clean plateau surface.

The next step in preparing a block is to sand the outer surfaces, which have been rough sawn to a smooth surface that reveals the grain pattern. Once your plateau is clean, I suggest that you wipe it with alcohol, which will cause the grain to stand out momentarily and will give you a realistic picture of what you may expect to find as you begin carving.

I find it helpful at this point to roughly sketch with a soft lead pencil various potential designs for my pipe on the side of the block. The marks are easily erased, and one may proceed until a design is reached that seems to fit within the available wood and that makes the best use of the grain pattern. Another advantage of cleaning up the blocks and doing this preliminary sketching is that you can frequently figure out ways to come up with a nice-looking pipe while cutting away parts of the block that display obvious flaws.

At this point, perhaps a few words about flaws in the briar are in order. You will seldom if ever find a piece of briar burl completely free of flaws, which may appear as cracks, sand pits or small pockets of foreign matter and may be found on the visible surface of the block or hidden deep within. Although most flaws, if left visible on the outer surface of your finished pipe, will not affect the smoking quality, one usually strives, simply from a desire for beauty, to achieve a finished product that displays no flaws.

I must admit, however, that strive as one may, achieving a finished product absolutely free of visible flaws is seldom possible. Even the most advanced professional pipemakers may find a pit or crack just as they are doing the final sanding on a hitherto flawless masterpiece. In this case, one must accept the flaw, remove it and use a fill or continue removing wood in the hope that the flaw is shallow enough to be sanded away without spoiling the pipe's shape. Another method frequently used by professionals when flaws appear is to revert to a sandblasted or otherwise textured finish to hide the imperfections.

While I personally admit to liking a well-done sandblast finish, I prefer a beautifully grained smooth finish, and I find myself striving toward that end in my own pipemaking. I have made a pact with myself to never use a fill to hide a flaw in one of my own pipes.

If I am unable to remove the flaw by further sanding or by using a strategically located depression (as is frequently done by the Danish masters), I'll consider sandblasting the pipe (I have the equipment but haven't actually attempted it yet), or else I'll leave the flaw visible. If the flaw is sufficiently disfiguring as to make the pipe unsatisfactory for my own use, I reluctantly discard it and start afresh with another block.

Making the pipe—For those of you who would prefer to start from scratch, instructions for drilling the tobacco chamber and smoke hole can be found in a separate section on page 60 of this issue. Most of you will probably begin with a predrilled kit, however, so your first step in actually making your pipe is to begin shaping it to its finished contours.

Briar burl is a very hard wood, and you will quickly find that removing large quantities of stock with a coping saw or hacksaw by first cutting off corners and other portions of the plateau that fall outside the lines of the finished pipe will save you much time and effort. (Save these pieces!) Be sure to leave sufficient stock for small changes in shape to allow for removal of interior flaws that might be uncovered in the sawing.

You may choose among several tools to actually shape the pipe. Experienced woodcarvers might prefer a knife. However, I believe that the hardness of the material makes files more appropriate. Even better is a hobby tool such as a Foredom flex-shaft or even a Dremel tool if you have one available.

I am fortunate to have a Foredom flex-shaft tool and a selection of cutting, grinding and drilling bits available in the shop. I use this tool almost exclusively to shape my pipes once I have removed the excess wood by sawing. The most useful bit I have found and the one I use about 95 percent of the time is a one-half-inch sanding drum equipped with the coarsest abrasive available (80 or 100 grit).

With this tool, I shape the stummel (that part of the pipe comprising the bowl and shank) from start to approximate final shape. It removes material quite rapidly, and you should practice with it in order to ensure that you don't inadvertently take off too much in any one spot. With a bit of practice, you can use it almost instinctively, and it allows you to shape the hard burl with amazing ease.

When you use this tool, I recommend that you wear a disposable paper filter mask to prevent the fine briar dust from clogging your nasal passages. Eye protection is also mandatory.

When you have achieved a shape that satisfies you, the sanding process begins. The object here is to refine the shape to its final lines and to remove as many flaws as possible (hopefully, all of them) from the visible surface while arriving at a stummel that is ready for staining and/or waxing.

I begin the sanding process with 100 grit paper, using hand sanding or wrapping the paper around an appropriately shaped item, such as a drill bit, a pencil or my finger, to get at the curved places. Once I have completely sanded the stum-

P&T's
"How hard can it be?" Pipe carving contest

C'mon, admit it. You've got a little talent—probably more than you realize; and you know a lot about pipes—you smoke 'em, don't you? You've looked at your pipes in the past and said, "I bet I could make one of these, if I was motivated."

Well, here's your motivation:

First Prize: Two days learning to carve pipes with noted pipemaker Al Baier in his Vermont studio. You and your spouse will enjoy the hospitality of Al and Ginny Baier while you learn pipemaking techniques from a master carver.

Second Prize: Three plateaux briar blocks—the finest quality available, chosen by one of the world's most respected pipemakers. Some of the pipes made from this briar have sold for thousands of dollars. You may never again have an opportunity to work with material of this caliber.

Third Prize: Two pipe kits—one plateaux with Lucite stem; one ebauchon with vulcanite stem.

The Rules: There are a few rules, of course. Wouldn't be a contest without rules.

1. Only amateurs are eligible. That means **you can enter only if you've never sold a pipe you've made.**

2. New pipes only. You can't send in a pipe you carved 11 years ago and have smoked into oblivion since. Our judges can't be expected to extrapolate how wonderful it used to be. It will take tremendous discipline for you to work for days on this pipe and not immediately fire it up, but this contest isn't for everybody.

3. No textured pipes. Maybe at some future date we'll hold another competition for rusticated designs, but for now, only smooth pipes will be considered.

4. No figurines. Again, maybe later. We may even hold a meerschaum carving contest. But we are presently looking for simpler designs.

The Judging: Assuming sufficient entries are received on schedule, pipes will be judged at a special *P&T* display at the Aug. 30, 1997, New York Pipe Show. Ballots will be distributed to show attendees, collectors, retailers, and professional pipesmiths.

Criteria: We will look for design, balance, symmetry and finish. Grain will be a factor, but only insofar as how well you maximize the nature of the briar you have. Minor flaws will not count against you. The pipe must also exhibit functional design. (No, we won't smoke it, but if the smoke hole doesn't connect with the tobacco chamber, we will notice.)

You may start with a kit or with an undrilled block, ebauchon or plateaux, but your pipe must be made of briar. You may use bits of any material, hand-carved or from stock.

How to enter: First, send a photo or photos of your finished pipe, postmarked no later than July 31, 1997, to: P&T Carving Contest, 3000 Highwoods Blvd., Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27604-1029.

The better the quality of the photo, the better we will be able to judge the pipe. Photos cannot be returned.

We will choose the 10 best pipes from the photos, and request that these pipes be sent to us for final assessment. We *will* return your pipe.

If you have questions concerning this contest, please write; we won't be able to respond to telephone inquiries.

Winners will be announced and their pipes displayed in our Winter 1997 issue. *P&T*

mel with the 100 grit paper, I progress to 150 grit, then 220 grit and on through 400 grit to final sanding with 600 grit paper. This process sounds fast in the telling, but it actually consumes more time than the actual shaping of the stummel with the Foredom tool.

The satisfaction you or anyone will feel from handling and using your finished pipe is largely derived from the perfection of its finish, so any amount of time spent to achieve perfection here is time well-spent.

When the sanding is completed to my satisfaction, I next wipe the entire stummel down with alcohol on a soft cloth. Wiping serves to remove sanding dust and to expose any flaws that the dust may have hidden or any scratches left by the final sanding. Almost invariably when I carefully examine the stummel, I find some tiny spot that I didn't sand quite thoroughly or some tiny flaw that I think could be removed by further sanding. This, mind you, after I was virtually certain that I had done a perfect job in the first place!

I have been known to revert to the 220 grit or the 400 grit level as many as three times on a single stummel before finally arriving at what I consider an acceptably sanded end product. I don't know if my oversights are caused by my poor eyesight or being in a rush to get the sanding done, but I hope to get better at this part of the game with practice.

Staining and waxing—The final step in preparing your stummel for use is to apply a stain—if you want to—and a thorough waxing. Many pipes will be enhanced by a stain that brings out the grain or simply changes the color of the unfinished wood to something more in keeping with the maker's aesthetic feelings. Pipemakers use alcohol-based stains that are available in a myriad of hues and shades.

I prefer a briar pipe to look like it's made of wood rather than some brightly colored substitute material, so I tend to stick to a natural finish if the grain is up to it or a light walnut or cherry finish if the grain needs the help. You can stain the small pieces of wood removed with your saw when you first began to shape the pipe to determine which color works best with this particular piece of wood. I apply the stain with a Q-Tip, being careful not to allow it to run down inside the bowl.

When the stummel is dry after a minute or so, I burnish it with a piece of

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0000 steel wool to remove excess stain and to lighten the stained surface to the desired shade. If the pipe is a plateau-topped freehand, you may wish to use a darker stain or even a black stain on the plateau surface. If you do, take special care to prevent the dark stain from running down the outside of the bowl.

I prefer to use the same color stain that I plan to use on the sides of the bowl, but to just apply it more heavily on the plateau top. Then I'll usually lighten the bowl color to some degree during my steel wool burnishing, thus giving a nice contrast between the top and sides of a plateau-style bowl.

Resources for pipemaking supplies

PIMO Inc.
P.O. Box 2043
Butternut Lane
Manchester Center, VT 05255
Phone: 800.362.3371

Probably the most well-known source for pipe-carving materials is PIMO Inc., run by Al and Ginny Baier in Vermont. Al is an incredibly talented pipesmith—and in fact got his start 18 years ago with the *PIMO's Guide to Pipe-Crafting at Home*, which is still offered through the company at a cost of $18.

PIMO's guide was written by Isso Alkaly, who founded the company and began supplying pipemaking supplies in the late '60s.

Al and Ginny Baier took over the company in 1995 and moved it to Vermont, where they now continue its tradition. But in addition to offering supplies, they also provide workshops. Novice pipecarvers can now spend two days, under Baier's tutelage, making a pipe from fine Grecian Plateaux briar with the full resources of Baier's workshop, tools and experience at their disposal.

Workshops take place in July and August, and are limited to two participants. The cost is $350, and includes continental breakfasts and lodging in the Baiers' guest rooms. Spouses are invited at no additional cost. Call the Baiers for further information and availability.

But you don't have to go to Vermont; PIMO can send you the materials you need to construct your own pipe at home. Besides the guide, they can provide ebauchons in a variety of sizes, priced from $4 to $7.50, and plateaux from $8 to $30.

They also offer prebored kits, with tobacco chamber and air-hole already drilled, and including a fitted stem. These are available in ebauchon and plateaux, and range from $13.75 to $27.

Different stem sizes and shapes may be ordered, in vulcanite or lucite, from plain to fancy.

Specialized tools, such as tapered drill bits—for drilling tobacco chambers—and an adjustable tenon turning tool are included in their catalog. Everything you need for final finishing is also available, from sandpaper to stains to waxes.

American Smoking Pipe Company
HC-88 Box 223
30 Tall Oaks
Pocono Lake, PA 18347
http://AmSmoke.com

Mark Tinsky is a highly regarded and gifted pipesmith who also provides pipe kits and accessories for the amateur carver. You can purchase one block or a bag of 244, in ebauchon or plateaux briar.

Single blocks are available in graded sizes, from 8 ounces for a medium-sized pipe, to 26 ounces for an extra-large.

Tinsky will, at no additional charge, choose the right piece of briar for your project according to your plans for a straight or bent pipe, its size, regular or flush-fit stem, and overall shape of the pipe.

The rough-top plateaux blocks are more likely to provide good grain than is the ebauchon briar, and is slightly more expensive.

Basic kits have pre-drilled tobacco chambers, air and tenon holes, and are priced at $23 plus shipping, with additional charges for larger-sized blocks of briar or acrylic stems.

Mail or Email orders only; no telephone number available. Each kit is individually made and requires up to two weeks for shipping.

Having stained your bowl to a satisfactory color, you're ready to apply the wax. I recommend pure carnauba wax, which is used by most, if not all, professional pipemakers and gives the hardest, longest-lasting finish of any wax. It is so hard that it cannot be applied by wiping on like most other waxes.

Carnauba must be applied by holding a chunk of the wax against a spinning cloth buffing wheel to charge the buff and then using the charged buff to apply the wax to the pipe. With care, this waxing procedure will result in an extremely hard glass-like polish on the pipe that cannot be achieved with any other wax. Other waxes are available that will do an acceptable if less satisfactory job, but I recommend pure carnauba.

Fitting the stem—I have left for last the subject of fitting your pipe with a stem so that you can actually smoke it. Because I have concentrated primarily on Danish-style freehands in my pipemaking thus far, I can leave making the stem until last. If, however, you have decided to make a standard shape for your first effort, shaping the stem must be integrated into shaping the shank of the stummel.

With standard shapes, the stem is exactly the same diameter and shape as the shank and must therefore be shaped together with the shank to get a smooth junction. In the few standard shapes I have made thus far, I haven't found this difference to cause any particular problem. I tend to simply place the stem in the stummel and then to shape the stem and shank as if they were a single piece of material.

A freehand pipe, on the other hand, seldom uses a stem that is formed as a continuation of the shank. In most freehands, the stem is a fancier shape, with symmetrical grooves and/or bulges, and it may be conveniently shaped and sanded apart from the stummel.

Once you have shaped your stem to the desired contour and sanded it to a smooth finish using only the finer grits of paper (320, 400 and 600), it is time to bend it to its proper curve to enhance the pipe for which it is intended (unless of course it is to be left perfectly straight). Vulcanite stems, which comprise the majority of stems in the pipes I have made thus far, may be bent quite simply with materials at hand in every home.

First run a pipe cleaner through the stem so that it protrudes from both ends. Bend the ends to 90 degrees more or less

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from the line of the stem. Put the stem and pipe cleaner in a small oven-proof container and cover it with a layer of table salt. Place the container in your kitchen oven set to a temperature of 270 degrees F for 10 or 15 minutes or until the stem gets soft enough to bend easily. Remove the stem from the salt by grabbing the exposed pipe cleaner. Using a folded handkerchief or other cloth to prevent scorching your fingers, bend the stem to the desired degree. Hold the bend in place with your hands and the cloth until the stem has cooled sufficiently to retain its shape unaided (only a minute or so).

Remove the pipe cleaner and try the stem in the pipe to see if you like the looks of your job or if you want to add or subtract from the bend or to make a slightly different arc. Return the pipe cleaner, and heat and bend again as desired.

Once you're satisfied with the bend, you may proceed to the final finishing of the stem, which is accomplished by burnishing with 0000 steel wool and polishing on a motor-driven buffing wheel charged with tripoli. You may, of course, use your electric hand drill to turn the buff, using a jig to hold the drill.

Now assemble your stem and stummel and gaze in awe at what your hands have wrought. I'm certain that you'll be pleased with it and that it will hold a special place of pride in your pipe rack henceforth.

Smoking my pipes—In the initial smoking of my handcrafted pipes, I have followed standard recommendations for loading and breaking in. I do not stain or otherwise finish the interior of the bowls of my pipes other than by sanding to remove the drill marks. The bare wood may be coated with a thin coating of honey for the first smoke if that is your normal method of breaking in a new pipe. I find that my pipes, being made from the finest of plateau briar available to me, break in and smoke much as any fine Danish freehand might be expected to respond. I start with a half-bowl of tobacco for the initial few smokes and quickly progress to a full bowl after two or three bowls.

Conclusion—In preparing this description of one amateur's methods of pipemaking, I have borrowed heavily from what I learned by reading *PIMO's Guide to Pipe-Crafting at Home*. I hope that my experiences may cause some of you who have wondered about pipemaking to actually give it a try. I doubted for years that I possessed the ability to make a decent pipe "from scratch." In so doubting, I cheated myself out of an awful lot of fun as well as who knows how many pipes. ***P&T***

Revised from The Ohio Pipe Club Journal, *with permission and approval from the author.*

Seeking a bigger challenge?

You needn't start with a pipemaking kit; you may wish to obtain a solid block of briar and drill the tobacco chamber and smoke hole yourself. Robert Everett has also successfully experimented in this field, and offers the following advice:

When the briar block is sawed, the sides and bottom are normally kept square with one another. When you sand, be sure to retain this squareness—it will allow you to plan the drilling of the tobacco and smoke holes precisely so that they meet at the proper place within the block.

Having sketched an outline of your planned pipe on the side of the block, the next step is to draw an outline of the tobacco hole and the smoke hole. It's a good idea, if possible, to center the tobacco hole in the planned bowl and to place the smoke hole so that it meets the bottom of the tobacco hole while still running down the center of the planned shank.

In the case of designs with bent shanks, the placement of the smoke hole must, perforce, come close to the top of the shank at one point in its length. In such cases it's important to plan the design and shaping so that one doesn't cut into the top of the smoke hole while shaping the shank.

Certain designs may be best achieved by first drilling the larger hole for the mortise (that portion of the shank into which the tenon of the stem fits) to its proper depth of 5/8 to 1 inch in the center of the planned shank. Next drill the smoke hole itself, offset somewhat in the bottom of the mortise so as to facilitate meeting the bottom center of the tobacco hole more easily. Once your drilling plan is sketched on the side of the block, it is time to begin actually making your pipe.

The first step is drilling the smoke hole and mortise and the tobacco hole. A drill press is your best bet. I am fortunate to have a wood lathe in the shop and find that, with the proper setup, I prefer using this handy tool.

The key to success when using one tool or the other, however, lies in accurately measuring the angles and depths of the holes you'll be drilling as related to the square outer surface of the briar block.

I first drill the smoke hole and mortise and then the tobacco hole. If the depth and angle of the smoke hole are accurately controlled, meeting the tobacco hole exactly in the center of the bottom is simply a matter of carefully drilling the tobacco hole while frequently pulling the bit out as you near the planned depth to visually check the bottom of the hole.

When the smoke hole becomes visible, carefully proceed, using a light touch with the drill, until the relationship of the holes with one another is optimal.

For drilling the tobacco hole, I highly recommend the special bits sold by Stemco-Pimo; they will produce a hole of the proper size with the proper rounded bottom contour. A set of three bits in sizes appropriate for most pipes costs about $20.

You could, of course, make your own bits by shaping commercial spade wood bits to the proper contour on a grinder. Another possibility that I have considered, but not yet tried, is to use contoured milling burrs of appropriate shape and size, which I have seen in tool supply catalogs. These are designed to mill holes in metal and would undoubtedly work equally well in briar burl and would perhaps leave an even smoother inner surface in the tobacco chamber than does a wood bit. Sanding the interior of the tobacco hole on a finished pipe is rather difficult because of its limited size and rather deep contour, so any help in this area would be most welcome.

When the drilling is finished, you are ready to begin shaping your pipe.

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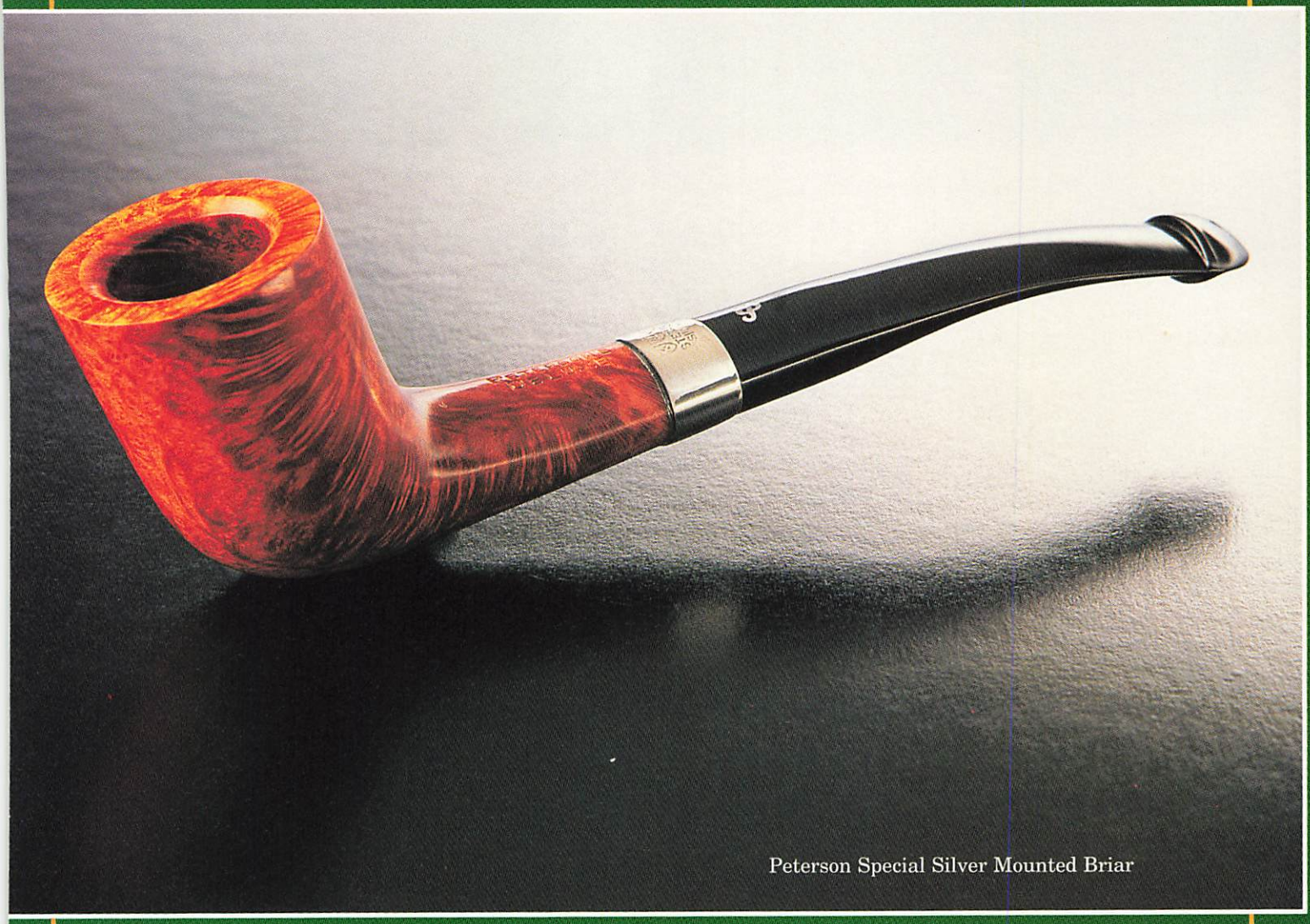

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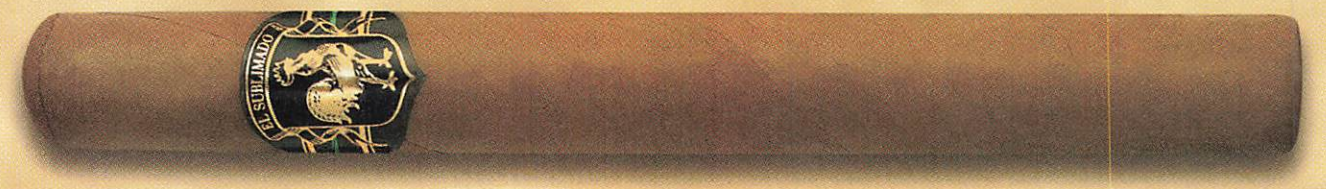

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A pipe smokers bridge to cigars.

Pipe smokers and cigar smokers have at least two things in common: Both enjoy the pleasure of a leisurely smoke, and both enjoy the variety of flavors which can only come from expertly blended tobaccos.

Many pipe smokers have found they can combine various flavor extracts with select tobaccos to create a variety of smoking experiences. These pipe smokers may now extend their pleasure to cigars thanks to the efforts of Jean Claude and Suzanne Marty who have found the perfect process to imbue cigar tobacco with the world's finest Cognac and Single Malt Scotch Whisky.

It has long been a delightful surprise to first discover the delicious harmony of flavors which is achieved by combining an exquisite hand rolled cigar and a sip of perfectly aged spirits. Indeed, many cigar enthusiasts have long used the literal method of immersing the head of their cigar into Cognac or Single Malt Whisky to achieve this flavor sensation. The problem with this emersion method, however, is that the flavors are typically inconsistent, usually weighing too heavily toward the spirits. Those who enjoy Cognac or Single Malt Scotch Whisky while smoking are just now learning how ingeniously the two can be combined.

Jean Claude and Suzanne dedicated four years of their lives to create the secret patented process used to imbue their cigars. For them, it was just as important to find the perfect blend of tobaccos as it was to find the perfect spirits. It was their objective that neither the tobacco blend or the spirits be predominant, rather that the two compliment each other.

Unlike many flavored cigars, El Sublimado and El Incomparable cigars are not sprayed or dipped after they are rolled. Each leaf in El Sublimado and El Incomparable cigars are treated prior to rolling. This pre-construction imbuing yields a delightful flavor which is consistent throughout the entire cigar.

As you can imagine, the time necessary to manufacture El Sublimado and El Incomparable cigars is considerably longer than their counterparts. While most cigars take two weeks to manufacture, El Sublimado and El Incomparable take over four months to complete. This extra time is necessary due to the additional manufacturing steps El Sublimado and El Incomparable must go through. In this day and time when cigar manufacturers are rushing to bring new cigars to market, it is encouraging to find a manufacturer who will not sacrifice quality for the sake of expediency.

It was not enough that Jean Claude and Suzanne found the proper spirits and tobaccos to accomplish their goal. They also wanted their cigars to smoke and burn with the consistency of a world class cigar. To accomplish this goal, Jean Claude and Suzanne employed the talents of the best cigar hand rollers they could find. Jean Claude and Suzanne's instructions to the rollers were "We want more than quality; we want perfection."

"We want more than quality; we want perfection."

El Sublimado and El Incomparable are quality checked not only during manufacturing but also at the point of distribution. And as if this were not enough, Jean Claude and Suzanne offer a 100% Manufacturer's Quality Guarantee, even if some of the cigar has been smoked! It is obvious that Jean Claude and Suzanne want nothing less than for their cigars to be your favorite cigars.

Cigar connoisseurs and pipe smokers alike will find both pleasure and gratification in El Sublimado and El Incomparable premium luxury cigars. The passion which drove Jean Claude and Suzanne to painstaking levels can be savored in every draw of El Sublimado and El Incomparable. And the perfected bonding of tobacco and spirits will certainly outlive Jean Claude and Suzanne as their legacy.

You can learn even more about El Sublimado and El Incomparable cigars from Jean Claude and Suzanne's World Wide Web Site at **http://www.Sublimado.com.** Enjoy.

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An advertisement

The next direction for tobacco articles

by Dayton H. Matlick

We have spent far more time on pipes than we have on tobaccos, but our coverage has been according to a basic plan. First, we wanted to understand the various types of tobaccos represented in a pipe blend. We also wanted to understand the people and the processes behind the tobacco. Raising tobacco is a rich tradition and involves generation after generation of real people who raise and cure their crops with pride.

The tobaccos we have covered so far include flue-cured or Virginia, burley, dark-fired, oriental and perique. One of the remaining major pipe tobacco blend ingredients is latakia. We planned to have an article on that type of tobacco for this issue, but it turned out to be a more difficult task that anticipated. (More on that a little later in this article.)

With the next issue, we will transition into new areas of pipe tobacco coverage. Our editorial plans for the Fall issue call for an interview with an expert leaf buyer. It will deal with his view of the various tobaccos, what he looks for within each type of tobacco, necessary storage and processing—all the steps between buying the tobacco and the time the blending process begins.

The next logical step will take us to manufacturers of pipe tobacco blends, both American and imported. There we will learn how they produce both the old, standby brands and new brands. Some famous brands will become article subjects in and of themselves. Over time, in *P&T* columns you will meet and learn about famous pipe tobacco companies and the individuals who make them run.

In addition, we will be turning to our readers for their reactions to various tobacco blends and comparisons within blends. Although taste is very subjective, we believe there is much to be shared. It will not be our purpose to rank various tobacco blends, but, rather, to help provide information that will assist pipe smokers in exploring new or different blends that may enhance their smoking experiences.

We also plan to complete our initial tobacco coverage by researching an article on latakia. However, circumstances may put this off for several issues.

Latakia is basically oriental tobacco cured over aromatic smoke. It is a black, strong tobacco that some smokers prefer in a blend. Most early production came from Syria. However, the deforestation that resulted from harvesting wood to smoke the tobacco caused latakia production to move from Syria to Cyprus. The resulting tobacco is quite different from the smoother, sweeter Syrian latakia, but possesses a character of its own.

Cyprus latakia apparently was produced mainly in the northern part of the island by people of Greek heritage. Partition of the island resettled individuals so that people of Turkish ancestry now live in the north and those of Greek ancestry in the south.

According to individuals we contacted, this chain of events has destabilized the production of latakia on Cyprus. In addition, it appears that latakia production is once more available from Syria, but at a high price and with infestations of insects that makes international commerce difficult.

All of this is hearsay at this point. We plan to travel in the region to get the latest information. However, travel is complicated by problems in getting into both north and south Cyprus, and into Syria. We'll get the story; it will just take longer.

In summary, beginning in the next issue, you will see a big difference in the tobacco-related coverage in *P&T*. Your comments, suggestions and criticisms will be welcomed. *P&T*

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Pipe cleaner *extraordinaire*

This Southern California pipe smoker has battled for 35 years to bring pipes back to "like new" condition

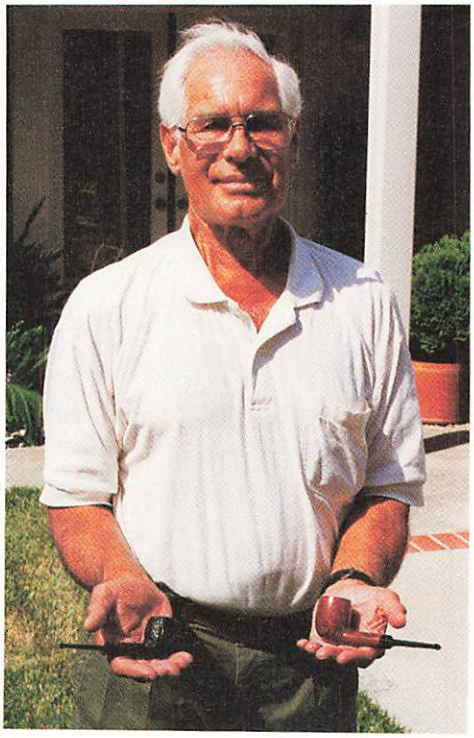
by Dayton H. Matlick

The pipes had seen better days—a Big Ben, a Comoy, a Peterson system standard and a Ben Wade. For example, the surface on the Peterson was obscured by dirt and grime. Black tar or gunk had leaked out around the shank-mouthpiece joint until it had almost welded the two together. It had also coated parts of the silver band and the mouthpiece. The mouthpiece or bit had turned an unsightly tannish-brown with all kinds of discolorations over the last three-quarters of an inch. The bowl was caked to half of its original capacity.

Jim Benjamin, pipe cleaner *extraordinaire*, shakes his head and moves steadily into the task of bringing the Peterson back as close to new condition as possible. Reaming out the bowl reveals more gunk in the bottom. After carefully removing the mouthpiece, the draft or air hole and the Peterson reservoir also turn out to be almost filled with more tar. "I bet the reservoir has never been cleaned out," Benjamin mutters to himself.

Getting a stuck mouthpiece out can be a trick in and of itself. Benjamin proceeds very carefully, making sure he has the whole bit in his hand and not just the end. If necessary, he is prepared to put a little alcohol around the joint above the silver band. The key appears to be knowing just how much pressure to apply and when to quit. "Don't force it too much," he says. "If it just won't break loose, place the pipe in a plastic bag and put it into the freezer for a half hour. The cold will cause the materials in the pipe to contract, with luck, enough to allow the bit to be removed."

When faced with cleaning up these pipes, all in about the same condition, you and I would probably be repulsed or frustrated...or both. For Benjamin, the light of battle gleams in his eyes. He attacks with a single-minded purpose until the struggle is over and the pipes emerge in renewed glory.



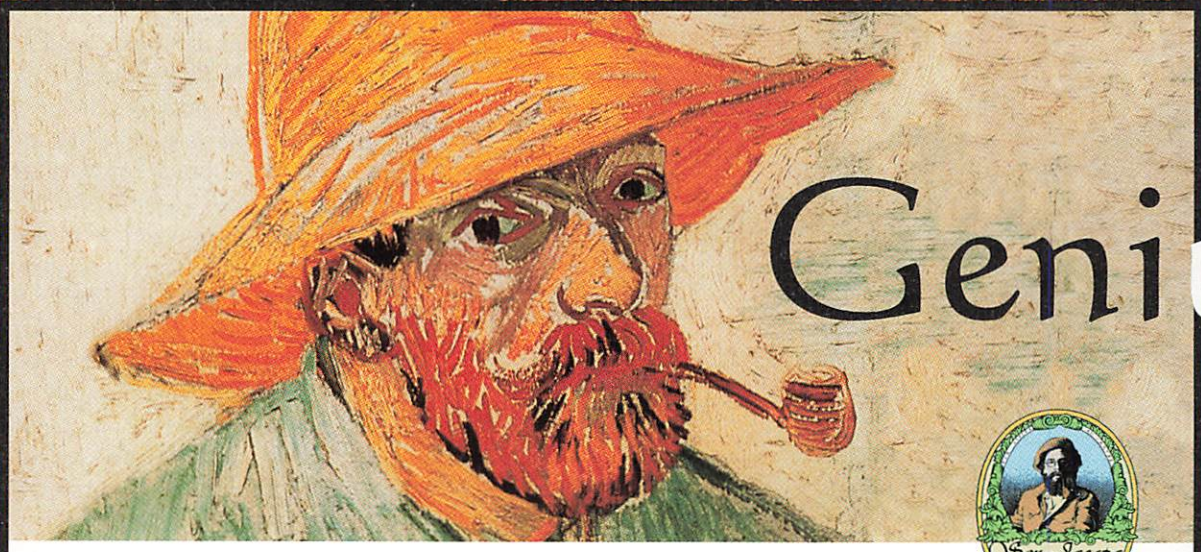
Benjamin holds two pipes he just recently cleaned thoroughly—inside and out.

Now that he has retired, one of Benjamin's greatest satisfactions is taking pipes in all stages of need and returning them to their owners absolutely clean and looking as close to new as their condition allows. He has been providing this service to both tobacconist shops and individuals for almost 35 years. He even cleaned pipes while he worked as an assistant director in the Hollywood film business.

Benjamin's first venture into smoking involved a eucalyptus pod, some ground coffee and a bamboo stem back in 1932, when he was nine years old. The unpleasant results put off experimentation for a few years. The big move came when he was 13 or 14 years old.

"I was in a boarding school at the time in Flintridge, California," reminisces Benjamin. "I wanted to get off campus, so I hitched a ride in a 1930 Model A station wagon—one of the school's old 'woody' school buses. I remember the driver's name was Chuck Chisolm. We went to the nearby town of Altadena, where I asked him to let me off in front of either a Woolworth or Newberry store. I still remember the red sign with gold letters. My goal was to buy a pipe. I paid 15 or 25 cents for this key to the promised land.

"Since I didn't have any tobacco, I had to improvise. When I got back to the cam-



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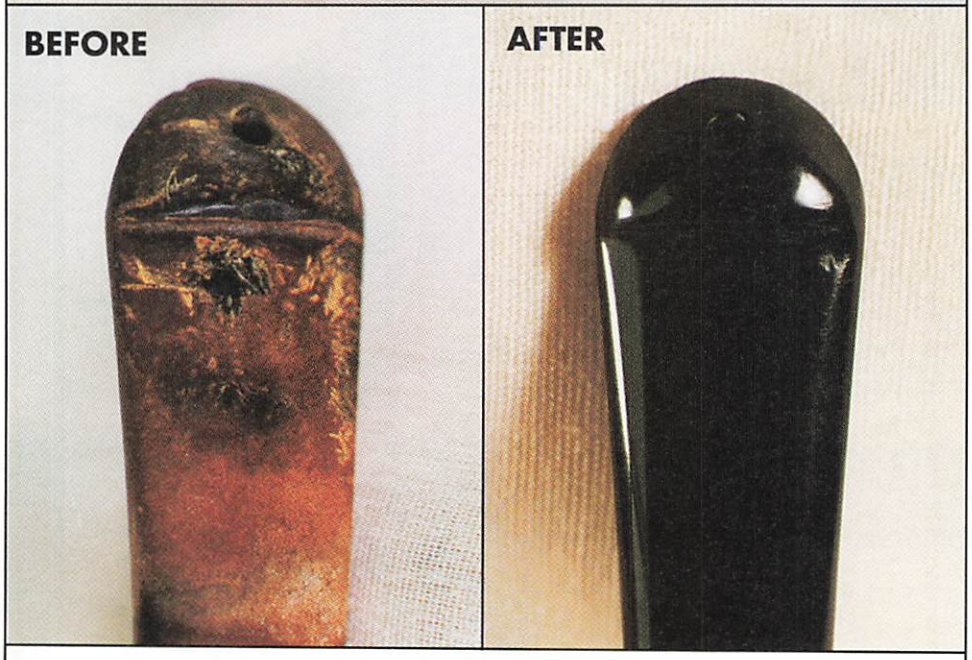

Tar had just about taken over this Peterson. It was even hard to get the stem out of the mortise. Tar clogged the air passage, the bottom of the tobacco chamber and the mortise. The bit or stem was badly oxidized and discolored. However, the pipe returned to its owner was clean throughout. Even the bit responded to the cleaner's touch.

pus, I emptied all the pencil sharpeners into the paper bag the pipe had been in for my tobacco substitute. It was perhaps the greatest case of tongue bite in history!"

After another recovery period, Benjamin started experimenting again. His mother, a nonsmoker, noticed and insisted that if he was going to smoke, he should only smoke a pipe. He took up pipes seriously when he was 16 and has been smoking them ever since—for 65 years.

"Cleaning pipes actually started with a cow horn. When I was a kid, my grandmother had a pipe-smoking English chauffeur named Arthur. I think he used to be in the Cold Stream Guards. When I would visit my grandmother, I'd go out and spend time with Arthur while he was working on the cars. He had a buffing wheel—a big clumsy machine—on which he buffed his pipes.

"I showed him a cow horn I had gotten hold of and asked him how to make it shiny. I was fascinated by the way he used the wheel and buffing compound to make that horn gleam. When I was smoking pipes, I got a little buffing wheel of my own. I started buffing my own pipes on it and later included those of my friends.

"I really got into the business of cleaning pipes when I started working for Gus's Smoke Shop in the late '60s. He had a pipe repairman, but most repairmen don't like to clean pipes. As a result, for many of them cleaning consists of reaming, buffing and returning the pipe. When the English owner, Norman Fudge, who used to work for Dunhill, saw the pipes I had cleaned, he asked if I would clean pipes for Gus's. That was when the commercial side started for me." (Note: Benjamin is no longer associated with Gus's.)

He made his living at that time in the film business—from 1949 until 1983 when he retired as an assistant director. During his career he worked at MGM, Universal, Fox, Warner Bros., Columbia, Paramount, plus a number of independents. Projects varied widely, from a nine-year stint on the "Lucy" show to "Mame" and "Yours, Mine and Ours," starring Lucille Ball and Henry Fonda.

When he first started in films, once you were in a company, you were there to stay—like being in a family. This rapidly changed until he, like most others, was only an independent contractor. He would work on a project until it was over and then be out of work until he could land another position. During his tenure,

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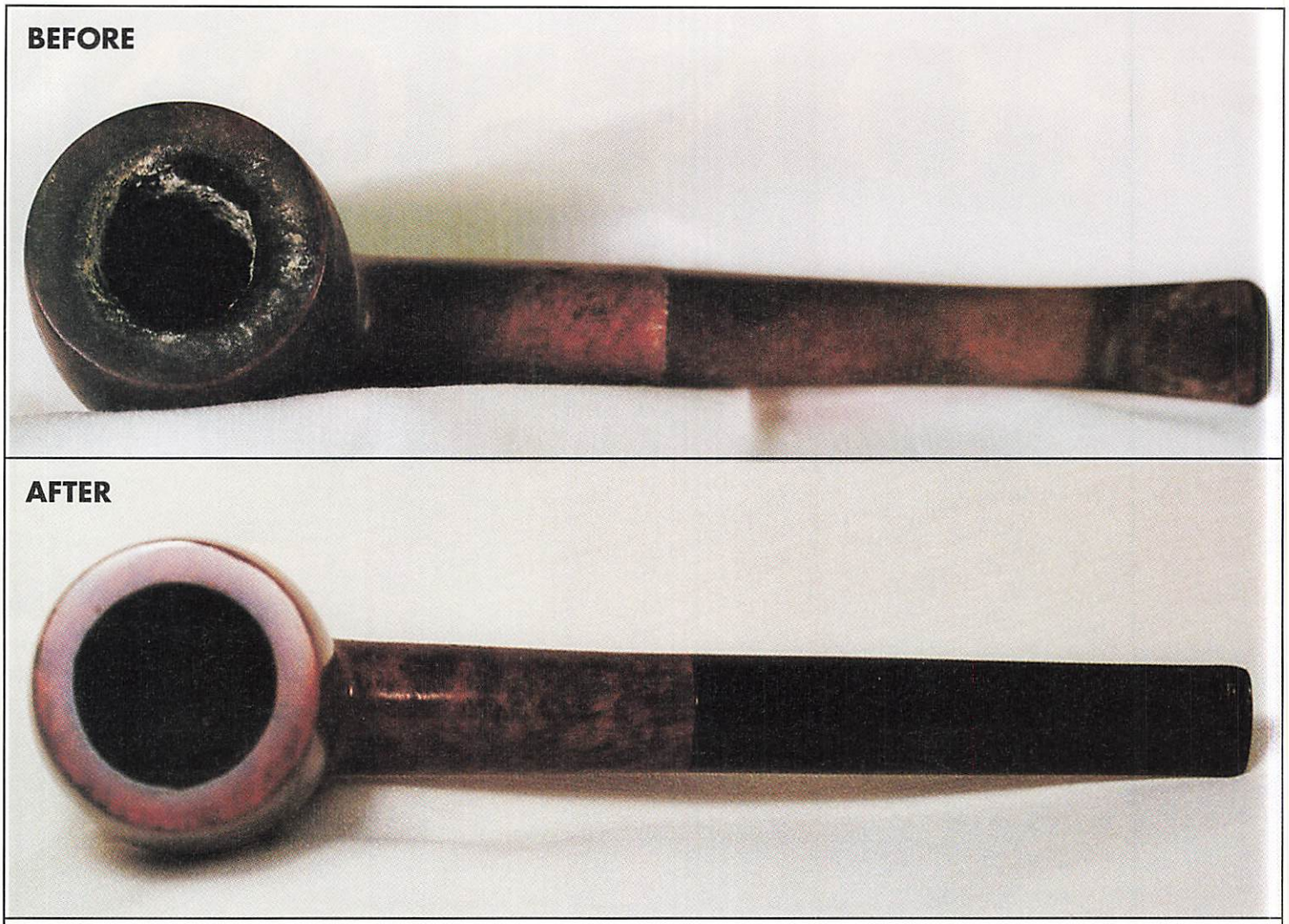

As the pipes above demonstrate, Benjamin's cleaning process completely rejuvenates heavily caked bowls and charred rims.

the industry basically changed from a secure, family atmosphere to a survival-of-the-fittest ordeal.

"We were called 'picture folk.' Our friends couldn't understand—or cope with—our strange hours. When we were shooting, it was nothing to go to work at 4:30 in the morning and work until 10 that night. It was a life of its own. Long, hard hours. No glamour. In contrast, my wife also worked in the film industry, but spent 27 years with one company—Warner Brothers!

"At MGM, my first job in the industry, many men smoked pipes. And, in those days, pipe shops were wonderful places. There was a romance about pipes and tobaccos. Today, most tobacconists just sell cigars."

A Benjamin-cleaned pipe comes back to its owner absolutely clean, inside and out. All of the tar and other gunk are cleaned out. The air passage in the shank and the area around the mortise get special attention.

All this takes place in his spacious shop. Along one side are sanding and buffing wheels; along the other, storage. The workbench across the back completes a compact, well-designed work area.

"You would be extremely surprised at what comes out. It looks like an oil change—gobs of pipe cleaner fuzz congealed in the tar.

"When you first smoke your pipe, you taste the full, wonderful flavor of your tobacco. Each time you smoke it, you will taste a little less, but it is a progressive loss and you don't notice it. If you keep smoking that pipe long enough without thorough, regular cleaning, the pipe will sour. By cleaning pipes the way I do, I can bring back the full flavor and enjoyment of your tobacco. Then it is up to you to keep that pipe tasting light and airy and sweet through regular cleaning and attention."

A first step in personal pipe care involves buying the basic necessities from your local tobacconist. Any pipe-aware tobacconist should carry soft cloths for wiping and polishing your pipes, pipe polish, bit-polishing cloths, bit polish and some form of pipe sweetener. Pipe sweeteners usually have a high alcohol content to help remove the tar and gunk.

(Editor's note: Some pipe smokers report using high-proof brandy, rum or vodka occasionally as a pipe sweetener substiture. However, these will all impart different flavors to the pipe, some of which smokers may dislike. Care in experimentation is recommended.)

One of the most important things a pipe smoker can do, according to Benjamin, is to simply keep the outside of his pipe clean—to keep it wiped off.

"I had one customer, a musician, who would get his pipes really dirty on the outside while he worked. When necessary, he would wipe them off with a slightly soapy damp rag and then dry them.

"When I get really filthy pipes, sometimes I find it necessary to wash off their exteriors with soap and water just to see what I have in my hand. When I get fin-

THE ARISTOCRATS OF PIPEMAKING...
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•not pictured but available upon request, #13 Canadian and #14 Panel.

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ished washing them, they look like a piece of old driftwood.

"The finish is the surface of the wood to me. To bring back some pipes, I sometimes have to use measures that remove the stain, such as sanding out a scratch. So I re-stain the pipe. There are a variety of stains available. I use powders that are mixed with alcohol. I mix and dilute until I get just the right shade. But I have to be very careful; different woods accept stains differently.

"I also have changed the color of pipes on request. For example, one customer brought me two Dunhills, one a dark *bruyère* and the other a light root briar. At his request, I changed the plum-colored pipe to match the other. This is all part of the basic $10 fee.

"People should only use pipe freshener to clean the tar out of their air channel and bit. The main thing is to use pipe freshener with pipe cleaners and/or brushes on a regular basis to clean out the bit and the shank."

Another thing Benjamin feels strongly about is the cake, a subject of debate among pipe smokers all over the country. First, he doesn't believe in artificial cake unless it is applied in the factory as part of the creative process. Second, he does not believe in a thick cake.

"I had a customer who worked for *The New York Times* who smoked marvelous, old, straight-grained Charatans which he brought into Gus's to be cleaned. They were all cracked right at a grain line because there was a big, thick cake in each. Carbon expands and contracts at a different rate than briar. If there is too much of it, it can split your pipe.

"After I have smoked a pipe two or three times, I bend a pipe cleaner double and rub the inside of the bowl to keep the cake from building up. It leaves a carbonized surface. That's all you need. If the cake is already too thick for that treatment, use a reamer or scraper, but be careful not to gouge the wood.

"Also, clean out the bottom of the bowl, if needed. It can get real gooey down there, especially if you smoke aromatic tobacco.

"Another approach I use requires a piece of Scotchbrite—a green nylon product used to clean pots and pans. I take a little piece, once the pipe is cool, stick it in and turn it around a couple of times and pull it out. It leaves a thin coat of cake, but prevents buildup.

"To maintain your bit, your tobacconist carries a paste that will help keep oxidation under control. But if oxidation gets out of hand, only a buffing wheel and bit compound will bring back the original gloss." (Editor's note: There is also a pink paste that comes in a tube that contains something like jeweler's rouge. It is marketed in hardware stores under many different names, such as Flit, Semi-Chrome, Moss and others, but is basically the same material. It cleans plastic, pewter, stainless steel—all kinds of things, including pipe mouthpieces.)

"When I finish smoking a pipe, I put

Buffing wheels and sanders line one wall of Benjamin's workshop. The workbench across the end is for hand work, such as cleaning out tar and polishing mounts.

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When pipes come back from Benjamin, they are clean inside and out—ready to display and enjoy. The tar is gone, the chamber is clean, the outside gleams. The once-charred bowl rims are smooth again. However, keeping them that way is up to us.

How to...
CARE FOR YOUR PIPE

Jim Benjamin gives the following tips for keeping your pipes in top-notch condition:

1. Store your pipe out of the light. Sunlight and, to a lesser extent, artificial light speed the rate of bit oxidation and can cause fading of the pipe's natural color.
2. Place the pipe in a rack where it is well-ventilated.
3. Maintain adequate supplies on hand for cleaning and polishing your pipes.
4. Wipe off your pipe after every use, with special attention to the part of the bit that has been in your mouth. Don't let dirt or grime stay on the surface of your pipe.
5. Run pipe cleaners through your pipe after every smoke.
6. Every third smoke, use pipe sweetener on pipe cleaners or with pipe brushes to clean out the tar and gunk from the mouthpiece or bit, the air passage in the shank and from the mortise.
7. Clean out the bowl regularly, leaving only a light coating or cake.
8. Buff the outside of the pipe regularly with a soft cloth to maintain a bright, clean appearance. Use polish as needed.
9. Maintain your bit or mouthpiece with a bit paste on a regular basis to keep it shiny and glossy.
10. Enjoy the beauty of your clean pipe and the pure taste of your favorite tobacco.

a pipe cleaner through it a couple of times, wipe it off with a soft, clean cloth and put it back in the rack. Every third time, I clean the inside of the mouthpiece and shank with pipe freshener.

"Then, once every year or two, depending on how much I smoke the pipe, I give it a professional cleaning. This maintains the full flavor of the tobacco and keeps the pipe looking good as well."

A professional cleaning by Benjamin also includes sanding off scratches or mars and re-staining the bowl to match the original color—or to change colors if the owner wishes. Followed by polishing with carnauba wax to bring the pipe back to its original luster. Use of carnauba wax requires a buffing wheel. It is a very hard wax. Most pipe smokers don't want to bear the expense of owning their own buffing wheel.

"However, there are several things I don't do. I don't make repairs. I don't sandblast. I don't try to remove sand pits. Often a small hole may be just the tip of the iceberg, so to speak. And I don't mess with fill spots. They are better off left alone," says Benjamin.

"If your pipe is structurally sound, I'll clean it up as close to new as it can get. On the other hand, one man sent me a pipe to 'fix' that his dog had gotten hold of and chewed thoroughly. I couldn't help him because the tooth marks went too deep.

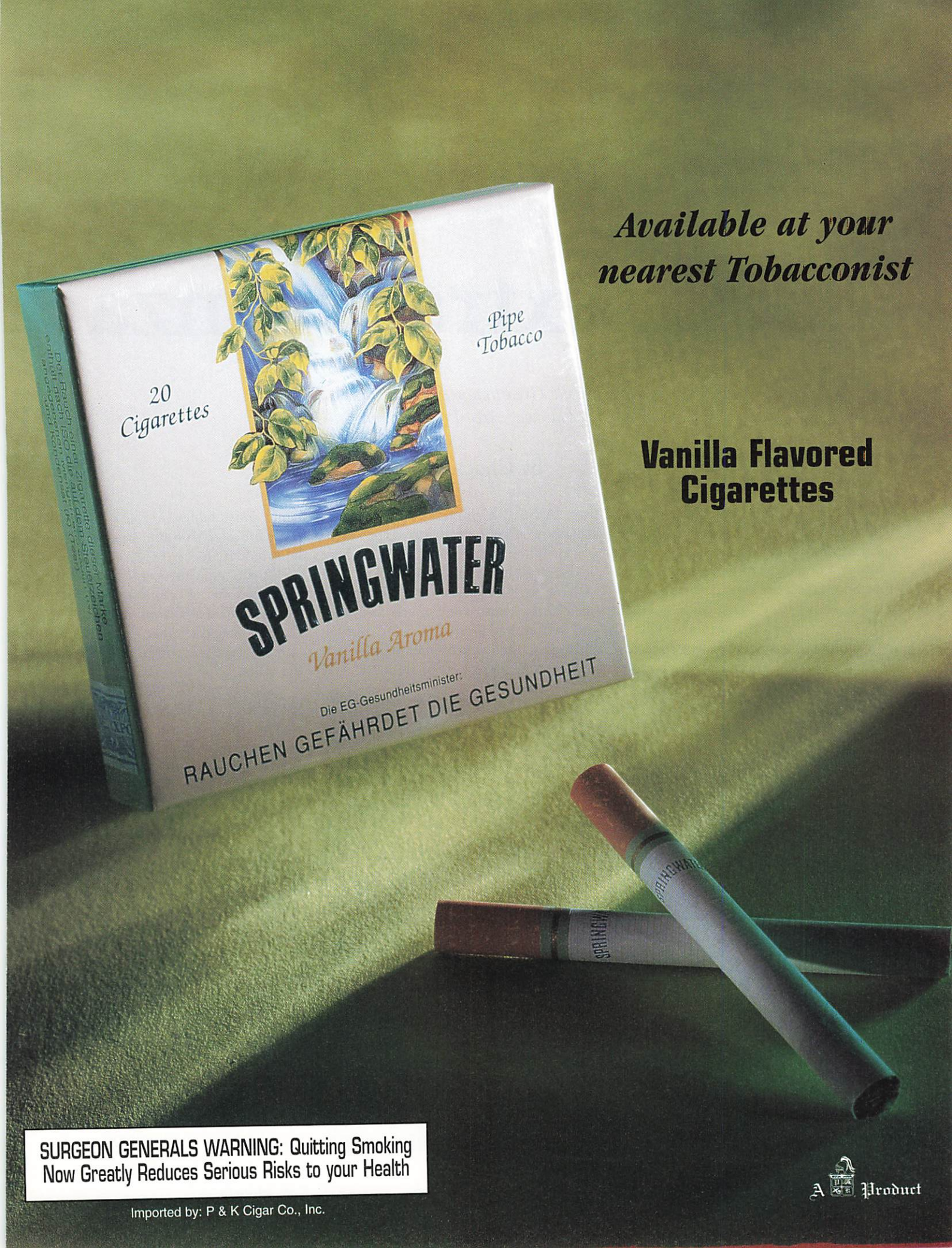
"What I do is to take dirty pipes and make them good as new, no matter how long it takes for each pipe. The cost is $10 for each pipe, plus postage and insurance. When a pipe comes to me 'tired,' I send it back clean and fresh, the same way it came from the factory."

Turnaround time depends on the number of pipes on hand. They tend to come in clumps. But usually pipes are returned within a week to 10 days.

"I'm not in manufacturing. I don't have that talent. When people give me a pipe and let me be, I'll do what I have to do. However, if they have a preference about some element in the process, I'll do it their way.

"To me, it's a great pleasure to take an old, filthy pipe and make it look sparkling new again. I love it. I get a charge out of it." *P&T*

Jim Benjamin can be reached at 12199 Avenida Consentido, San Diego, CA 92128. Telephone: 619.674.4900.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Briar extravaganza

Castello Greatline collection sets the tone for the Gateway Area Pipe Show in St. Louis

by Chuck Stanion

Jay Milton is a precise, detail-oriented individual who thinks carefully before he speaks. As president of the St. Louis Pipe Club, and organizer of the Gateway Area Pipe Show, these are essential attributes—a pipe show is a logistical challenge requiring excellent organizational skills.

Milton's business card reads "Collector of Fine Briar Pipes," and at the bottom lists "Ascorti, Caminetto, Ser Jacopo." Italian-made pipes are his favorite, which is evident here at the St. Louis show where he displays a huge array of Castellos.

Now any Castello is worth having; it is one of the most consistently beautiful and well-crafted brands available. But Jay Milton's Castellos are fabulous pieces—all Greatlines, the best of the best. And while most tables at the show present pipes for sale, Milton dismisses the offers he is tendered.

"Is this pipe for sale?" asks a distinguished-looking gentleman, pointing with one hand at a stunning quarter-bent Dublin-shaped straight grain and feeling in his coat pocket for his checkbook with the other.

"Sorry," says Milton. "These are just for display."

The man is confounded; he stares despondently at the pipe.

"I'll give you my car," he proposes hopefully. "It's brand new," he adds.

"Thanks anyway," says Milton. "I have a car."

"Yeah. I thought I had a pipe before I saw that thing."

It's a typical reaction: People approach Milton's table, look at a pipe, their eyes widen, they look again at Milton, look at another pipe, push their jaws shut, pick up a pipe gingerly, mumble incoherently in astonishment, replace the pipe carefully, and wander off in awed disbelief, bumping into people and tables and walls as they try to regain composure.

You can identify anyone who has just come from Milton's display by their dumbfounded expression. "Hey," you may say to them, snapping your fingers in front of their eyes. "You OK? Just come from Jay's table?"

"Hmm? Huh? What?"

"Yeah, I thought so. Here, sit down for a while."

Jay Milton shows some of his outstanding Castello Greatline pipes to a visitor at the Gateway Area Pipe Show, put on by Milton and St. Louis Pipe Club members.

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And Milton doesn't even list the Castellos on his card.

Why are the Ascortis, Caminettos and Ser Jacopos worthy of business-card billing, but not the Castellos? Are they a mere sideline, a casual diversion? He has a gazillion dollars worth of Castello briar on display, and they apparently aren't even his main interest. "Well, I wouldn't say that," says Milton.

"They're just my most recent interest. I should probably have new cards printed."

Milton needs only two more pipes to complete the Greatline collection, "if it ever is complete," he adds. "I need an Epoca Greatline, and a Trademark Greatline. The Trademark should be easy to obtain; they are out there, they exist. It's the dark burgundy, smooth finish. The Epoca is a "candledrip" carved finish. I've heard of, and I think I've seen pictures of, a couple of Greatline Epocas from the 1980s. But Castello hasn't released any in recent years, so I'm just waiting."

Milton's Castello collecting started innocently enough. At a show several years ago his table was next to that of Chuck Rio, one of the original Castello collectors. Rio handed Milton a Castello and said, "Here, buy this, it's only $300. It's a bargain. You'll love it."

"I was busy at the time," says Milton. "I think I bought it unconsciously. But it really grew on me."

Most of the Castello collection is unsmoked—Milton has a few select Castellos set aside from the Greatline collection that he smokes regularly. But he prefers the pristine condition of unsmoked pipes for his display. "There are quite a few pre-smoked pipes in my Caminetto collection, though. I was into shape numbers, and new ones are not available. But overall I like a new pipe. I like breaking a pipe in myself. I keep saying that someday I'll sit back and smoke more of these pipes that I've acquired."

Milton is unwilling to recommend one of his favorite brands over another. "There is no 'best,' although my first love is Caminetto. In 1978 I started out smoking a pipe—you know, the $10 kit we all start with—then moved up to a couple of $25 pipes, went to a freehand, and then really latched onto the Caminettos, before and after they quit original production. It was really after they quit that I got into collecting them.

"The Ascorti collecting really grew out of my love for Caminettos, because Ascorti was a carver for Caminetto. I like that Italian styling, and Italian pipes are great for their smoking quality and even more so for their design.

"Then when Ascorti's production dropped off, Ser Jacopo really became interesting to me. The most recent thing is the Castellos—the Greatlines. I like extra-large-sized pipes. Really, all of my pipe collection—over 400 pipes—consists of larger pipes."

Other St. Louis Pipe Club members are also collectors, says Milton. "Our vice president, Bob Callaway—and that's an unofficial title, he really doesn't want that to get out, don't print that—his collection is more eclectic than mine. He likes freehands and large-sized pipes with a slight bend. I believe he has several hundred."

The St. Louis Pipe Club has 15 active members, but only three or four are what Milton calls contributing members. "By that I mean such as the pipe shops who help sponsor us. We don't have dues, so there are no paying members, and the dealers don't really attend meetings, but they've backed us over the years.

"Larry McSpadden, who owns two Tinder Boxes in town, helps us out, and Ron Purcell, who owns Town & Country Tobacco, helps. Joe Giardina sells wholesale to dealers and supports us by always coming to our shows. John Dengler, of Dengler Tobacconist, lets us hold our monthly Saturday morning meetings at his shop."

The St. Louis Pipe Club meets monthly, with both morning and evening meetings. The morning meeting is every second Saturday of the month, and the evening meeting every fourth Saturday. "Most of our members can make the Saturday morning meeting. Those who can't, come to the Saturday evening meeting.

"And there are some of us," says Milton, "who enjoy attending both." *P&T*

Gateway Area Pipe Show

Financial constraints required the Gateway Area Pipe Show to cut back to one day this year, down from the two-day shows they have always had in the past.

There are advantages to the one-day venue, however. Walk-in traffic is better in the compressed time frame, as the attendance on the second day generally slacked off. And because money is saved by not requiring security over Saturday night, the cost of renting a table has been reduced, allowing more people to display.

"At $25 a table," reports St. Louis Pipe Club President Jay Milton, "you only need to sell one or two pipes to recover your expense, so people with just a few pieces are willing to display. It's worth $25 just to have a place to sit down."

Show Awards

Best Pipe of Show: Basil Sullivan, Charatan Coronation

Best Brand Name Collection: Mike Reschke, Peterson Collection

Best Motif Collection: Glen Bethel, Bent Sandblasts

Best Dealer Display: Hermit Tobacco

Special Merit Award: Joe Giardina, for consistent support and enthusiasm over the years.

* * *

New York Pipe Show

The New York Pipe Show isn't even held in New York, but it is a pipe show, and a great one. Held twice a year—in March and August—the show takes place in Newark, New Jersey, just outside of New York City. "I wanted people attending the show to be able to get off the plane," says Rice Essermann, the show's co-director, "and in 10 minutes be here. That's important."

The New York Pipe Show is primarily display-oriented. There is no pipe smoking contest, no judging of displays for various awards. "We get down to business at this show," says Esserman. "Awards and contests are nice, but there're always some hard feelings, whether anyone admits it or not because not everyone can win a prize. We like to just concentrate on the pipes."

And there were plenty of pipes at the March show. The aisles were full most of the day, often to the point of immobility. The 42 rented display tables saw lots of action. "But the main point of the show isn't how much money changes hands," says Esserman, "but the camaraderie and the fun we have here. The best part for me is seeing old friends and making new acquaintances."

The August show should be just as good, so keep your calendars open for Saturday, August 30.

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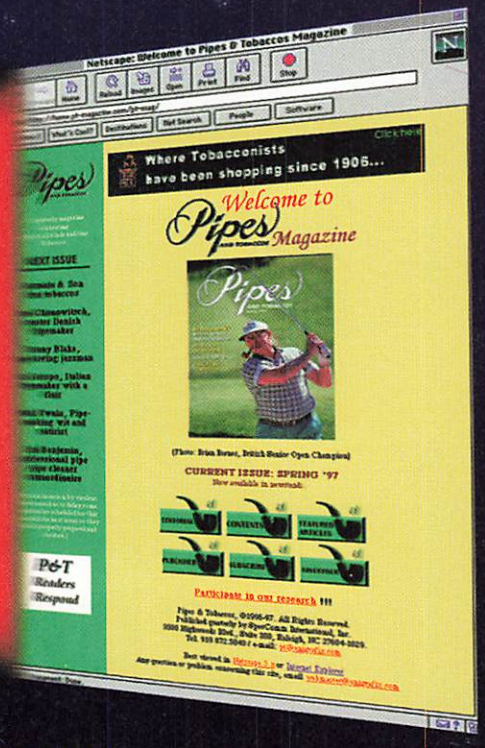

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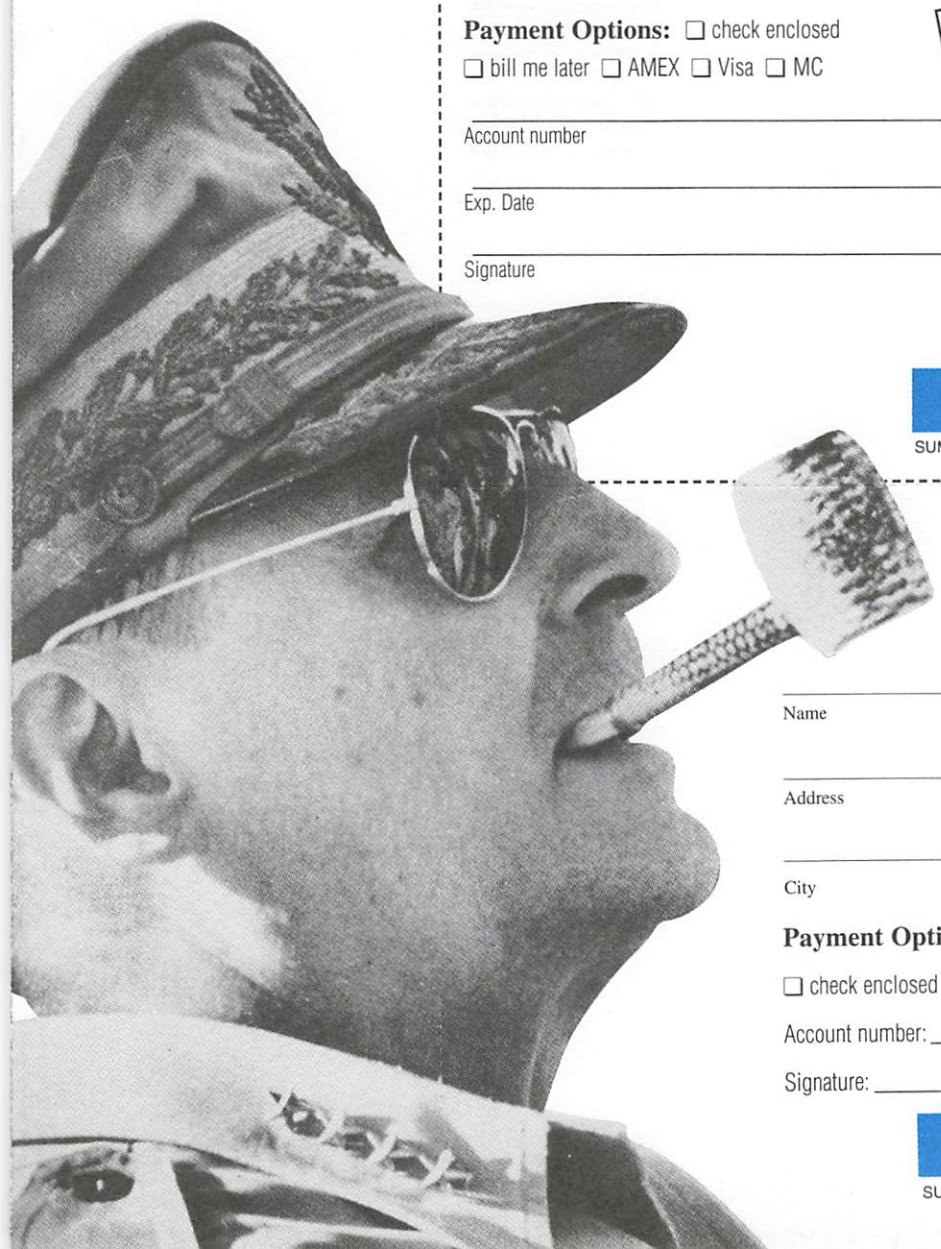

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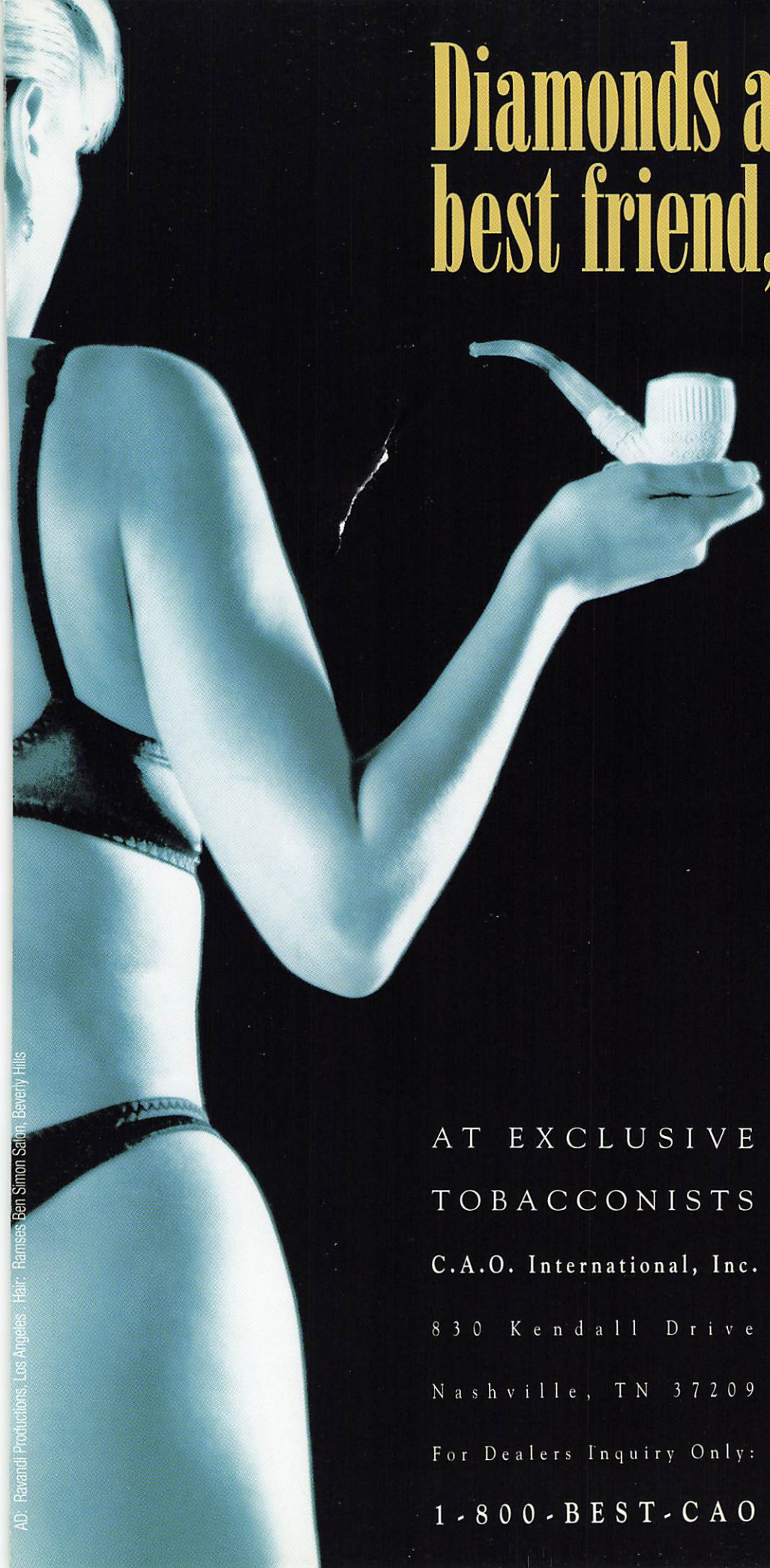

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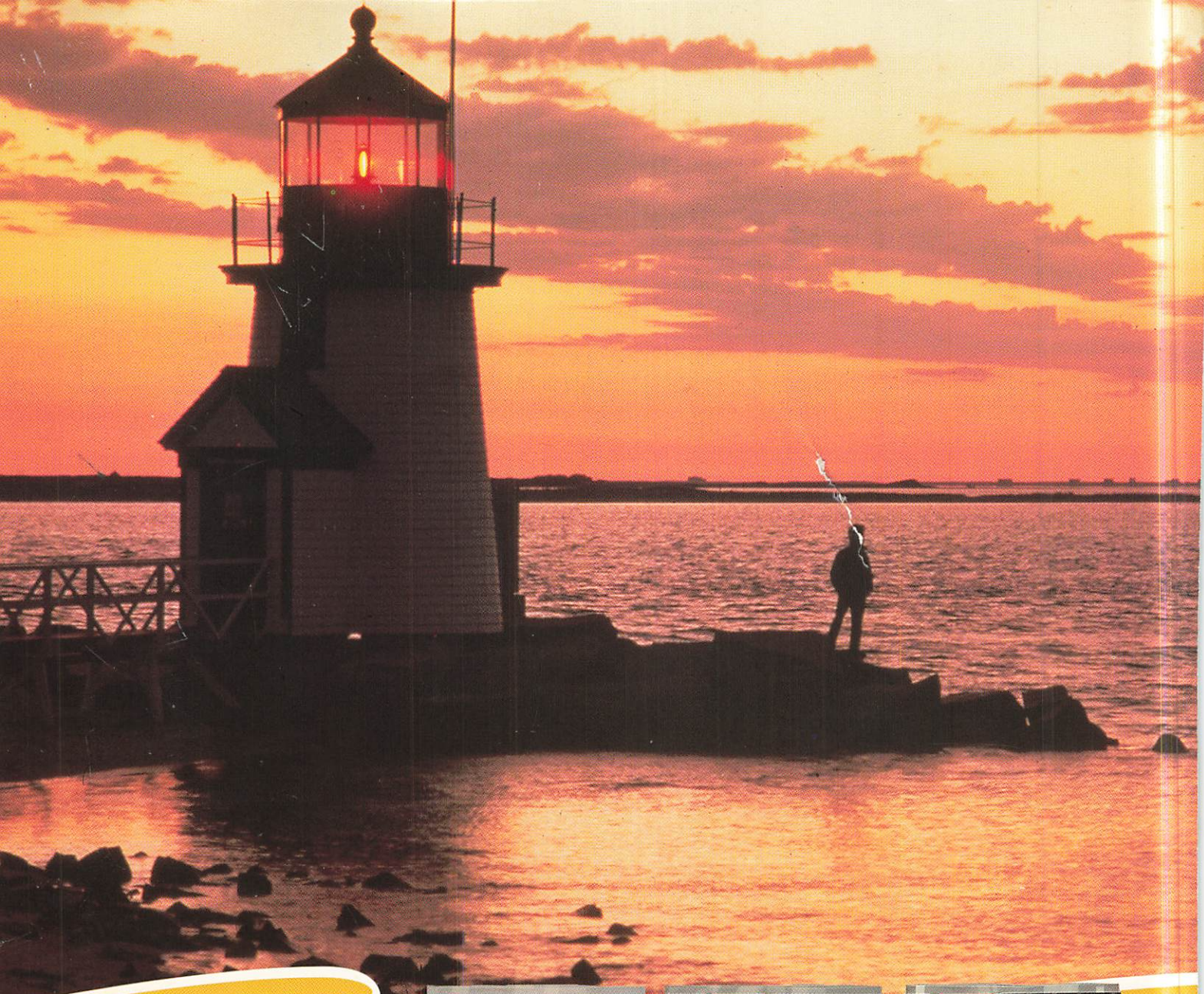

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